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FORT MCMURRAY
THE POLITICS OF A CRISIS
metroVIEWS

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven ...

Metro reports from inside a national catastrophe, page 3

A helicopter battles the wildfire on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SPECIAL REPORT FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRE — **7 pages of COVERAGE**

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metro NEWS

TIMELINE

MAY 1, 6:27 PM: POLICE WARN OF FIRES BURNING TO NORTH AND SOUTH OF CITY

SPECIAL REPORT FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRES Follow the events

Facing fire

Tim Querengesser
IN FORT MCMURRAY

Fort McMurray resident Crystal Maltais buckles in her daughter, Mckennah Stapley, after evacuating their home Tuesday.
COURTESY TOPHER SEGUIN

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven.

The next thing is the smell — solvents, charcoal, ash — punctuated by the sound of sirens and desperate calls, seemingly everywhere along the highway, for diesel — "you got any diesel?"

Those calls were part of the overriding feeling of helplessness Wednesday evening, here on the southern edge of Fort McMurray, as dozens of people who wanted to help were forced to hold station by police as the fire yet again crossed Highway 63, the only road into town.

"Black smoke usually means a house or a car is on fire," said Jeff Parker, sitting in frustrated limbo in the cab of his truck as 50,000 litres of diesel — intended for firefighters battling the blaze — sat uselessly behind him. "And I see a lot of black smoke."

Parker has been trucking up to Fort McMurray since 2009 and has dozens of friends who live there, many of whom have been displaced.

"It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows," he said. "Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday."

Just a few kilometres north, the fire that people who fight them have called "nasty" — one that has pushed more than 88,000 people to flee north and south of a remote city surrounded by boreal forest — continued inflicting pain.

By Wednesday evening its flames had swollen to 10,000 hectares, from 7,500, and officials worried the class 4 fire might potentially spread to the city's airport. More than 250 firefighters, many who came at a moment's notice to help, were battling to save a city that's small in population but central to the economic health of Alberta.

> **It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows. Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday.**
> Jeff Parker

That fight was already lost in many areas: More than 1,600 homes and business have been destroyed, and with the trifecta of 30C temperatures, low humidity and strong winds — along with worries about lightning storms — officials feared the fire was not done destroying.

On Wednesday afternoon, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley declared a state of emergency, the Canadian military began mobilizing to help and the fire claimed its first fatality — in a car accident near Lac La Biche, as thousands continued to flee south.

Approaching the city from Edmonton, kilometre-long convoys of pickups trucks, evacuation buses and SUVs, many coated in beige ash, turned roads in northern Alberta into a human river.

Abandoned vehicles — including one city bus — were left scattered along Highway 63's shoulders, an apocalyptic vibe counteracted by dozens of good Samaritans, who set up spontaneous gas stations and restaurants Wednesday right on the asphalt, offering gasoline out of jerry cans, water or food out of the back of their pickup trucks.

"It's going to be a long-term recovery," said Scott Long, executive director of provincial operations at Alberta Emergency Management Agency, in a daily briefing on the fire. "The damages are surprising. It will take years (to recover), for sure."

From Parker's cab, watching clouds of smoke billow through the windshield, that was a sentiment shared.

"To bounce back from this, it's doable, but it's not going to be overnight," he said.

Tim Querengesser is the managing editor of Metro Edmonton. He has written about Fort McMurray for various publications and has covered western and northern Canada since 2008.

A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

Residents of Gregoire, south of Fort McMurray, are evacuated to MacDonald Island.
MAY 1 - 10:55 PM

Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signs a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.
MAY 1 - 9:57 PM

Residents are warned of poor air quality and low visibility in much of Wood Buffalo.
MAY 2 – 6:05 AM

A family takes refuge in the back of their boat after evacuation at a rest stop near Fort McMurray, Alta. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nine newborn babies taken to safety in hospital drama

EMERGENCY

Official 'grateful and proud' after successful move

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

During the height of the fire consuming Fort McMurray, Alberta Health Services staff had to evacuate more than 100 patients from the city's hospital to escape, including nine newborn babies.

Dr. Verna Yiu, AHS' Interim CEO, confirmed early Wednesday morning that they had successfully moved all of the patients out of the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre to Edmonton.

"We had nine babies that were in the neonatal unit that actually had their mother with them and had to be evacuated," she said.

Yiu said AHS worked with WestJet to dispatch a plane to an oilsands site where most of the patients were initially evacuated to and brought all of them to Edmonton.

She said it was an incredible effort.

"I have to say that I am really, really grateful and proud of our staff," she said.

She said moving that many patients, who are now scattered around Edmonton hospitals, took an enormous amount of co-ordination and work, all while many employees were losing their own homes.

"Those employees and staff also had their own families to worry about," she said.

She said all of the patients including the newborns were healthy. She said while empty, the hospital was still standing.

COMPASSION

Crisis means displaced animals

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Many animals in Fort McMurray have been displaced or left behind as wildfires continued to burn at "explosive" levels Wednesday.

Deanna Thompson, executive director of the Alberta Animal Rescue Society, said some will be flown to Calgary.

At a news conference Wednesday morning, Fort McMurray Fire Chief Darby Allen said 48 animals saved from homes are at the McDonald Reception Centre. But other animals have not been so lucky.

RJ Bailot, executive director with the Alberta Spay Neuter Task Force, said rescue groups have been barred from entering the city to rescue animals trapped in homes.

"It's awful," he said. "We have dogs and cats in homes that are desperate. There's nothing we can do."

Bailot said a Facebook page, Fort McMurray Fire Emergency Animal Assistance, has been created to let owners know which camps and hotels are accepting animals.

Cuddles is believed trapped in an apartment. CONTRIBUTED

SURVIVAL

Escaping fire and smoke on horseback

Liz Brown
Metro | Canada

As the wind changed and wildfires pushed toward the north side of Fort McMurray, 16-year-old Jada Polem saddled up her horse and started riding through the bumper-to-bumper traffic on Confederation Way.

On Monday, her family had moved their three horses from Clearwater Horse Club on the city's south side to a northside campground they thought would be safe. But Tuesday, winds shifted and in hours they were moving their horses again.

"We were waiting for trailers to come back to pick up my horse, but it became impossible for them to get through," says Polem.

As the smoke worsened, Polem's father drove the truck and trailer that could only hold two horses while his daughter rode the third alongside. It was a terrifying prospect, as horses can be nervous in traffic, but Polem saw no other choice.

"She was a little nervous," Polem says of her Quarter Horse mare Mya. "But she handled it really well. I'm pretty sure she knew what was going on. Drivers were smiling and saying things to me like, 'That's a good mode of transportation,'" she adds.

It took four hours for Polem to ride 15 kilometres to safety — to the water treatment plant where her father worked. There she regrouped with her family and other horse owners, who were able to find a trailer spot for Mya.

Now the whole family — horses included — is safe. They're camping in their trailer in Boyle, 350 kilometres south of Fort McMurray. But Polem isn't sure about the status of their home. If there is extensive damage to their home, the family may stay in Boyle for the summer as they rebuild.

Karley Kenny, also a member of the Clearwater Horse Club, escapes on her horse while ponying two others. JULIE LODGE

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 2 - 11:16 AM

The communities of Prairie Creek, Gregoire and Centennial Park are mostly evacuated.

550

MAY 2 - 11:00 AM

Officials say **the fire is between 550 and 750 hectares** in size but not yet threatening homes.

State of emergency in effect

CRISIS

Province takes control of 'unstable' situation

Alberta declared a state of emergency Wednesday as crews frantically held back wind-whipped wildfires that have already torched 1,600 homes and other buildings in Fort McMurray, forcing all 80,000 residents to flee.

"The situation in Fort McMurray is not stable. It is unstable," Scott Long of Alberta Emergency Management told reporters in a Wednesday afternoon briefing.

"The downtown core is being held through some Herculean efforts of the structural firefighters in the area."

Municipal Affairs Minister Danielle Larivee said the state of emergency allows the province to take full control of the situation, conscript people if necessary, and bulldoze structures as required.

"We are still in the throes of an intense crisis," said Larivee.

There were dangerous and dramatic developments on multiple fronts Wednesday in a story that has made headlines worldwide with stunning video footage of trucks and cars driving past sheer walls of flame.

There were haunting images of scorched trucks, charred homes and telephone poles, burned out from the bottom up, hanging in the wires like little wooden crosses.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley flew up to survey the situation first-hand, while officials in the evacuation centre had to bolt to the south of the city as flames edged closer.

Notley tweeted pictures of the fire from above. "The view from the air is heartbreaking," she wrote.

The blaze effectively cut Fort McMurray in two late Tuesday, forcing about 10,000 north to the safety of oilsands work camps.

The other 70,000 were sent streaming south in a bumper-to-bumper snake line of cars and trucks that stretched beyond the horizon down Highway 63. Some vehicles sat in ditches, the victims of engine trouble or a lack of gas.

The displaced arrived in communities of Anzac, Lac La Biche and Edmonton. Some were going as far as Calgary.

Crews had been battling the blaze since Sunday. But the situation turned destructive within minutes on Tuesday afternoon when the blaze, whipped up by winds, roared into the southwest corner of the city.

It engulfed homes in three subdivisions and destroyed vehicles, gas stations and a motel.

A helicopter battles an out-of-control wildfire in the evacuated oil hub of Fort McMurray, Alta., on Wednesday. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Most of the homes in the suburbs of Beacon Hill and Waterways were destroyed.

There have been no reports of fire-related injuries or deaths.

The wildfire was still listed out of control as it curled around the city, 435 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, and was expected to reach 10,000 hectares by day's end.

Robin Smith with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, which includes the city, said it was believed everyone left the city.

"We have RCMP patrols that are regularly looping the neighbourhoods to make sure there's no one straggling," said Smith.

Long said area pipeline operations were shutting or reducing operations, and residents of the nearby Alexis-Nakota First Nation were ready to leave on an hour's notice if necessary.

The province said 255 firefighters were on scene, backed up by 12 helicopters and 17 air tankers. The military has provided rescue helicopters and 15 residents who had been cut off by fire were airlifted to safety, Long said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SUPPORT

Canada reacts to wildfires

As one of the largest wildfires in recent memory burns through northern Alberta, governments, companies and organizations across are reaching out to help.

ONTARIO

The Ontario Natural Resources Ministry announced it would send water bombing aircraft and more than 100 fire rangers to Northern Alberta. The firefighters are scheduled to ship out Friday.

Toronto-based charity GlobalMedic is ready to commit aerial drones to help firefighters better view the affected areas. The aid organization has also offered inflatable housing and water purification materials.

CIBC is offering financial assistance to their Fort McMurray clients and donated $100,000 to the Red Cross.

MANITOBA

Firefighters in Winnipeg are ready and willing to battle the blaze, if necessary.

"We'd have a quick turn-round to send resources if needed, but right now they're not requesting any because they have sufficient support from (fire departments) in Alberta," said Alex Forrest, president of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

B.C. Premier Christy Clark told media Wednesday the province needs to focus on its own wildfires as a blaze continues to ravage Fort McMurray. The province is unable to spare any firefighters to help Alberta's efforts but Clark says B.C. has done "everything (Alberta) has asked." METRO

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

Prairie Creek and Gregoire residents are told they can return home if they choose, but **most don't come back** in case situation escalates.

MAY 2 - 5:40 PM

Fire Chief Darby Allen urges residents to get their emergency kits ready. "We're in for a tough day," he says.

MAY 3 – 11:00AM

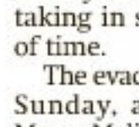
Mandatory evacuations are issued. Residents are told to go now to MacDonald Island Park.

MAY 3 - 2:05 PM

The Fort McMurray evacuation

WILDFIRE

Success was not without some loss of life



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

The successful evacuation of 88,000 people from Fort McMurray was a gargantuan undertaking in such a short period of time.

The evacuation orders began Sunday, as Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signed a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.

There was a tragic turn of events Wednesday when an SUV collided head on with a tractor-trailer on Highway 881, a southern escape road, killing two and shutting down the road in both directions.

Volunteer evacuation begins

A fleet of buses was commandeered to get Gregoire residents evacuated to Mac Island and residents in Prairie Creek and Centennial Park were started to get moved out.

By early Monday, the volunteer count that was set out had been reached, and those three communities were essentially cleared of residents.

Later that day, after an assessment of the fire, Prairie Creek and Gregoire residents were told they could return home if they chose, but most didn't go back, fearing the situation could escalate.

Mandatory departures ordered

Traffic lines the highway as residents leave Fort McMurray, Alta. on Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Shifting winds and other weather factors combined to create a perfect storm for the wildfire to shift course and continue bearing down on the city.

At that time, Fort McMurray ordered mandatory evacuation for Beacon Hill, Abasand, Waterways, Draper, Saline Creek, Grayling Terrace, Downtown, Thickwood, Wood Buffalo and Dickinsfield.

A city divided

It was "the big move," according to Benfield. He said the city decided to split Fort McMurray in two, where those who live south of the bridge would drive south on Highway 63 and those who live north would drive north.

Benfield said he didn't make notes during this time.

At 1 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, there were 75 officers working on the ground, knocking on doors, directing traffic and using loudspeakers to notify people.

Dozens of others were also on social media, notifying people online about evacuation information.

"We had to make some decisions based on speed and direction of fire," Benfield said.

"We had to make the best decisions we could with the information we had at the time."

Complete clearout

By 6 p.m. Tuesday, all residents of Fort McMurray were ordered to flee. But by this point, Benfield said most of people were already on the road, either heading north or south as told.

But he commended residents for the smooth evacuation.

"This is where the community came together," he said. "People were helping people. People weren't putting themselves before others — they were trying to help their neighbour and get everybody as quickly as told."

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 2 - 10:20AM

THE BIG MOVE. The city decides to split Fort McMurray in two. Those who live south of the bridge drive south on Highway 63 and those who live north drive north.

MAY 3 - 3:39 PM

Highway 63 southbound is closed at Mackenzie Boulevard.

All of Fort McMurray is placed under a mandatory evacuation order, including MacDonald Island.

MAY 3 – 6:20 PM

'Total support' offered

DISASTER RELIEF

PM Trudeau pledges federal resources to Fort McMurray

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the federal government will provide all possible assistance to Alberta as wildfires ravage Fort McMurray.

Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times, Trudeau told his caucus Wednesday.

"I've been dealing with offers of support and calls from the Atlantic provinces, all the way out to B.C., as people are looking for how they can support their friends and neighbours as people go through this difficult time."

Trudeau urged people with friends or family in Fort McMurray to make sure they are OK and ask what help they need.

Federal leaders called on Canadians who want to help to donate to the Red Cross.

The prime minister said he has already spoken to Alberta Premier Rachel Notley to offer his government's "total support."

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, in a conference call from Germany early Wednesday, confirmed a formal request for assistance has been received from the Alberta government.

Notley told a news conference that a memorandum of understanding had been signed with National Defence to provide helicopters for search-and-rescue efforts in isolated spots around Fort McMurray as well as transport aircraft to fly in firefighters. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

AGENDAS

Notley absent from premiers' conference

A disastrous wildfire raging in northern Alberta has forced government leaders in western Canada to tweak their plans to meet in Vancouver later this week and has pushed emergency management towards the front of the meeting's agenda.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley will no longer attend the 2016 Western Premiers' Conference, which is scheduled to run Thursday and Friday. Deputy Premier Sarah Hoffman, who also serves as the province's health minister, will replace Notley as Alberta's representative.

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark, who is hosting the annual gathering, said emergency management will be at the forefront of the discussions as the blaze in Fort McMurray, Alta., forces tens of thousands to flee the encroaching flames.

"Alberta's in the midst of it at the moment, but every other western province experiences forest fires, floods, concerns about earthquakes and other disasters," Clark said. Still, Clark said much of the conference would also centre around the economy, given what she described as Western Canada's role in a national context.

"We have traditionally been the economic engine of the country for the last decade," she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 3 - 8:25 PM

Highway 63 southbound opens south of Confederation Way.

MAY 3 - 9:41 PM

Motorists stranded on Highway 63 are asked to stay put as police patrol the area with gas cans.

MAY 3 - 10:00 PM

Edmonton Fire Rescue and the Edmonton Police Service send fleets to help with the Wood Buffalo fires.

ADVICE

Track all expenses: Insurance companies

Insurance providers are preparing to assess the damage from a massive fire still burning in Fort McMurray, Alta., that has charred homes, cars and other treasured possessions.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada is urging those who have been forced to leave the city to contact their insurance providers and keep track of all their expenses.

"Insurers are mobilized and will answer questions," said IBC spokesman Steve Kee.

Home insurance typically provides coverage for the property, the possessions inside and living expenses incurred while unable to stay in the residence, said Rocco Neglia, vice-president of claims at Economical Insurance.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Raging forest fires whipped up by shifting winds sliced through the middle of the remote oilsands hub city of Fort McMurray, prompting the evacuation of the entire city.

TERRY REITH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oil, gas firms tend to needy

SHELTER

Focus on relief effort rather than business

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Alberta's oil and gas companies are scaling back to essential workers, are housing evacuees and are even shutting down facilities as wildfires continue to threaten Fort McMurray, Alta.

As 88,000 people fled the immediate region of Fort McMurray — seeking refuge in several camps set up to house evacuees — companies such as Suncor, Shell and Imperial Oil and Husky were being run on bare-bone crews.

On Wednesday, Shell said it made the decision to focus on getting employees and their families out of the region while also freeing up room at its 2,000-person work camp for some of the 80,000 people who were ordered evacuated Tuesday from Fort McMurray.

Shell's mining operation is located about 70 kilometres north of the city.

"Right now, our priority is providing support for our people, their loved ones and others in the area," Shell spokesman Cameron Yost said in an email. "Our work camp, the Albian Village, is now open to all evacuated Fort McMurray residents."

Others, like Calgary-based Husky Energy, whose site is some 60 kilometres from the fire, said it's business as usual.

"We have opened our camp facilities to evacuees, and we're helping in any way we can," said Mel Duvall, spokesman for Husky.

Suncor Energy spokesman Paul Newmarch said that company has evacuated all non-essential employees from the operations across the region.

Imperial Oil hasn't had any impact to operations, but is reducing staff to essential workers at the Kurel oil sands mine while keeping a close eye on the situation as it develops.

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

7.5K
Officials say the out-of-control conflagration spans between 7,500 and 10,000 hectares.

MAY 4 - 10:00 AM

Wood Buffalo announces 88,000 people have been evacuated, with no reports of injury.

MAY 4 - 10:28 AM

The Alberta government declares a state of emergency.

MAY 4 - 3:30 PM

A world up in smoke

As fire ravages Fort McMurray, Alta., these images depict some harrowing scenes from the carnage.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SURREAL VIEW This photo taken through a car windshield shows smoke rising from a wildfire as it rages outside of Fort McMurray on Tuesday. The entire population of the Canadian oil sands city had been ordered to evacuate as the wildfire whipped by winds engulfed homes and sent ash raining down on residents. MARY ANNE SEXSMITH-SEGATO/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAVING WHAT THEY CAN Family pictures packed in suitcases are seen as a family of evacuees camp out on their van at a beach south of Fort McMurray on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

FUEL FOR THE ROAD AHEAD People gather for gas being handed out at a rest stop near Fort McMurray on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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FW-17: METRO TORONTO

Bloor bike lane pilot a go

TRANSPORTATION

Council votes to move ahead with separated cycle tracks

After decades of advocacy by Toronto's cycling community, bike lanes are coming to Bloor Street.

Following a lengthy debate Wednesday, council voted 38-3 to move ahead with a pilot project of installing physically separated cycle tracks along a 2.6-km stretch of Bloor Street West between Shaw Street and Avenue Road. The city's transportation department plans to install the lanes by late summer, and report back in the third quarter of 2017 with recommendations about whether they should be made permanent, modified, or removed.

The council vote was a major victory for bicycle advocates, who have long argued that cycling infrastructure is needed on Bloor because the major east-west downtown thoroughfare attracts a significant volume of riders, but offers them little protection from motor traffic.

Bicycle advocates have long argued that cycling infrastructure is needed on Bloor Street. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

The idea for bike lanes on the street has been debated by city officials and advocates since at least the early 1970s.

Coun. Joe Cressy (Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina) one of two local councillors who spearheaded the initiative, said the decision was "long overdue" and shows that city politicians have outgrown the divisive disputes about the "war on the car" that characterized much of the last council term.

"An overwhelming majority of councillors today, from north to south and east to west, voted to install bike lanes on Bloor. It reflects and shows that our city has moved past the debates and divisions of old," Cressy said.

A City of Toronto graphic depicting separated bike lanes to be installed on Bloor Street in the summer of 2016. CONTRIBUTED

> **It reflects and shows that our city has moved past the debates and divisions of old.** Coun. Joe Cressy

Up to 3,350 cyclists a day use Bloor between Shaw and Avenue, according to city staff. But some councillors argued that Bloor is also an important driving route in and out of the downtown core for residents in the city's outer wards, and that the bike lanes would restrict the flow of traffic.

"I'm here actually to stand up for the people of the west end of the city who are going to be directly impacted," said Councillor Stephen Holyday (Ward 3, Etobicoke Centre), who voted against the pilot.

"This blocks the people from the west end from getting in and out." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

How the project's success will be measured

The Bloor bike lane pilot will be subjected to "the most comprehensive performance evaluation undertaken for a cycling project in the City of Toronto," according to a city report. Staff will measure the following aspects.

Cyclists: Biking volumes, and riders' reported perception of safety.
Bike lanes: Use of nearby existing lanes on Harbord.
Traffic flow: On Bloor Street, arterials like Dupont Street and Harbord Street, and nearby local roads.
Parking: The availability of and revenue collected from both on- and off-street spots.
Retail: Loading and delivery at local businesses.
Pedestrians: Potential conflict with people crossing the cycle track.
Local economy: Impacts on retail sales, customer mode share, and storefront vacancies.

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Give transit its own lane, says councillor

LAKESHORE BOULEVARD

Congestion called 'unfair' to riders

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Traffic backs up along Lakeshore Boulevard near Park Lawn Road. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Coun. Mark Grimes believes prioritizing transit could provide a temporary fix to traffic woes affecting the Humber Bay Shore area.

The Ward 6 councillor is introducing a motion seeking to establish a transit-only lane in the eastbound median lane of Lakeshore, a move he says would allow transit services to operate a lot faster and more reliably.

"Park Lawn-Lakeshore is at a tipping point right now. It's a major kerfuffle," he said, adding extra congestion comes from drivers avoiding the Gardiner and taking Lakeshore as they head into town or out of it during rush hours. "We have to give priority to people that are taking public transit."

The area has a confluence of different public transportation routes, including the 501 streetcar, the 66 Prince Edward bus and the recently added 145 Downtown/Humber Bay Express bus. But Grimes said sharing all the lanes with vehicles make the situation "unacceptable" for those taking public transit.

> **We have to give priority to people that are taking public transit.**
> Coun. Mark Grimes

Grimes said congestion has come as a result of downtown growth, with a number of new residential developments springing up in the area in the past few years. As the city continues to study a transportation master plan for the area, a short-term solution could give solace to those taking public transit, he said.

"Right now people are paying double the fare to be on the Express bus, only to be stuck on the road behind cars. That has to stop," he said.

WARD 2

Michael Ford to run for Rob Ford's seat

Rob Ford's former constituents will decide who should replace him on council.

Michael Ford, the nephew of the late councillor and former mayor, said he will run for Ward 2 Etobicoke North.

Michael Ford TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

His statement, announcing that he is resigning as a Toronto District School Board trustee, came Wednesday afternoon minutes after city council voted unanimously to hold a byelection to replace Rob Ford, who died in March.

Mayor John Tory moved to hold the byelection on July 25, the date recommended by city staff, saying it was the "right choice" with more than two years until the next general election. Council procedures would have also allowed members to appoint a replacement until the next election.

No other potential candidates have yet declared their explicit interest in running.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

Police bust counterfeit TTC token ring

Undercover Toronto police officers have arrested a 27-year-old woman in connection with a TTC counterfeiting operation.

Jia Zeng has been charged with five counts of fraud including possession of counterfeit slugs, the sale of counterfeit slugs, dealing with counterfeit tokens, attempted fraud under $5,000 and possession of property obtained though crime.

Police say Zeng was in possession of over 100 fraudulent tokens. A search warrant executed at her home found even more fake fares.

SHANE PERUSSE/FOR METRO

Scarborough residents are pushing for Nuit Blanche exhibits to come east. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Scarborough has eye on Nuit Blanche

EVENTS

Residents want Guild Park added to list of official venues

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Scarborough residents want a piece of Nuit Blanche.

The city will be studying whether to add Guild Park and Gardens in Scarborough to the list of official Nuit Blanche venues in 2017, and local residents say it's about time the all-night art festival headed east.

"A lot of people have to travel all the way downtown every year for Nuit Blanche experience," said John Mason, president of Friends of Guild Park and Gardens. "Just imagine if they could have access to the arts displays here."

Mason feels hosting Nuit Blanche would bolster the suburb's art community. Scarborough already has a vibrant art community, whether it's music, visual art or creative writing, he said.

"But everything is very much all over the place, with no common area," he said. "If Nuit Blanche was here every year, it would certainly bridge that gap."

Mason's group has been at the forefront of pushing the city to bring Nuit Blanche to Scarborough. In a letter of support sent to the city, the volunteer organization underscored Guild Park's history as a venue for local arts programming, albeit not at the scale of Nuit Blanche.

"This would help us take arts and culture to the next level and create an artistic legacy here," Mason said. "And it really bodes well with city's objectives of making arts more accessible both in downtown and outside the city."

Scarborough Coun. Paul Ainslie believes Guild Park would be an ideal venue, and noted that 2017 coincides with the park's planned revitalization.

The goal of the revitalization is to help attract art and culture events to the neighbourhood, he said.

> **Just imagine if they could have access to the art displays here.**
> Friends of Guild Park and Gardens President John Mason

NBA PLAYOFFS

TPL hope Raps beat the Heat

The Toronto Public Library is lending its support to the Toronto Raptors as they continue their playoff run.

Library staff took to Twitter Tuesday, posting a picture of a Raptors hat alongside books on air conditioners and other ways to "beat the heat."

The Miami Heat, of course, are the Raptors' round two opponents in the playoffs.

"It's fun for our fans, but also fun for us going through the exercise and choosing books," said librarian Vickery Bowles.

Last year TPL engaged in a friendly Twitter spat with the Kansas City Public Library when the Blue Jays were facing the Kansas City Royals.

This time around, however, the Miami library isn't taking the bait.

"We'd definitely love to hear from them," Bowles said, adding that more book-spine poetry is in the works. GILBERT NGABO/METRO

TPL has jumped on the Raps bandwagon with a tweet poking fun at the Miami Heat. TWITTER

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Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is joined by his wife Melania, right, daughter Ivanka, left, and son Eric, background left, as he speaks during a primary night news conference on Tuesday. MARY ALTAFFER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trump victorious

U.S. ELECTION

Last GOP rivals withdraw before populist juggernaut

Donald Trump's last Republican foe, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, ended his quixotic presidential campaign Wednesday, cementing Trump's remarkable triumph as his party's presumptive nominee and launching him toward a likely fall battle with Hillary Clinton. Some reluctant Republicans began to rally around Trump, but others agonized over their party's future.

The billionaire businessman vowed to unite the splintered GOP, even as he was bitingly dismissive of members who have been critical of his campaign.

"Those people can go away and maybe come back in eight years after we served two terms," he said on NBC's Today show. "Honestly, there are some people I really don't want."

Clinton, in her first remarks since Trump's new status was crystallized, said she was more than prepared to handle the kind of deeply personal attacks that helped defeat Trump's Republican rivals.

"To me, this is the classic case of a blustering, bullying guy," the all-but-certain Democratic nominee told CNN.

Trump's takeover of the GOP marks one of the most stunning political feats in modern political history. A first-time candidate, he eschewed traditional fundraising and relied more on his own star power than television advertising to draw attention. He flouted political decorum with controversial statements about women and minorities, leaving some Republicans convinced he won't be able to cobble together the diverse coalition needed to win the general election.

"It's his party between now and November, but I don't think it's going to be his party after November," said Peter Wehner, a former adviser to President George W. Bush. Wehner is among the Republicans vowing to never vote for Trump, even if that means essentially handing Clinton the presidency.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **To me, this is the classic case of a blustering, bullying guy.**
> Hillary Clinton

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, May 5, 2016

RUSSELL WANGERSKY: WE'RE WITH YOU, FORT MCMURRAY

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work? It stretches families far apart, but it weaves us together across a big country.

They're talking about Fort McMurray on the St. John's, N.L. Metrobus.

People don't usually talk much on the Metrobus, you understand. But they're talking today, and it's a conversation being heard across the Atlantic provinces, from Tim Hortons in Sydney to small towns in the Annapolis Valley. A simple trip online finds reporters from Newfoundland to Charlottetown to Halifax asking Atlantic Canadians in Alberta to get in touch.

The talk started Tuesday night with the first evacuation order in Fort McMurray. Social media lit up with first-hand tweets and Facebook posts about the fire. Soon, there was a complete evacuation, video showing the fire terrifyingly close and people at this end of the country posting information about how to make telephone donations to the Red Cross.

On Wednesday, fire officials were watching the weather, expecting wind, and posting grim lists of the areas hardest hit by the advancing fire: "Beacon Hill — 80 per cent loss of homes; Timberlea — 12 trailers lost on Mckinlay Cres."

For so many East Coast workers and their families, Fort McMurray is a long way west, but also the worksite next door.

The oilpatch may be slowing, but it's far from stopped: scores of Atlantic Canadians either travel there for work or have moved to the northern Alberta city, putting down roots. Some people (not completely glibly) call it Newfoundland and Labrador's second largest city. Cape Breton could say the same.

It's the great class equalizer on many East Coast flights: workers sometimes use their frequent flyer status to move up into first class, bringing baseball caps and work jackets into the rarefied land of Air Canada's Zone 1.

Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

HANG IN THERE **You don't have to tell people on the East Coast about the devastation in Alberta** — the oilpatch is 'as near as a nephew or niece,' Russell Wangersky writes.
MICHAEL DE ADDER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

It also means that Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

By Wednesday morning, Edmonton was expecting 20,000 evacuees, and thousands more had gone north. It's an evacuation of astounding proportions and it's touching people across this region quickly, people wondering and worrying about friends and family on the move.

How close to home is Fort Mac to people on the East Coast? You don't have to tell anyone here about it — it's as near as a nephew or niece.

At The Telegram in St. John's, the news editor reposted Tweets in almost real-time from his nephews, their car turned around by a transformer explosion and forced north out of the city.

One of The Telegram's reporters used to work at Fort McMurray Today, the city's main newspaper; his daughter, born in the Alberta city, made her parents turn off the television because she can't watch the fire burning places she knows.

And there's this exchange, posted on Facebook by my niece, recounting a conversation with her four-year-old about my niece's sister in Fort McMurray:

"Mommy what's going on?"

"It's a fire, sweetheart."

"Is Auntie Christina OK?"

"Yes buddy."

"Does she still have a bed?"

"I don't think so, sweet pea."

"It's OK mommy. She can sleep here in my bed."

In the office next to mine, an editor hasn't slept, following a friend's journey — husband, wife, seven-year-old twins and the family dog — north out of Fort McMurray, into huge highway gridlock, then south again, taking their chances along a previously closed highway, until there's a 1:30 a.m. post saying they are safely out of range of the fire: "We were 8 hrs in our car and finally made it out ... It's surreal to not know what exactly we are facing in the next few days."

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work?

It stretches families far apart but it weaves us together across a big country, as well.

I remember, years ago, talking to a woman who ran a lounge in a small town on the southern tip of Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula. The town was too small to keep the lounge running, so it was closed most of the time. We were in an airplane, heading west, but she'd flown east to open the lounge for a wake.

She lived in Fort McMurray, working as a manager in a hardware store. Her husband was driving a dump truck at Syncrude — her son, too. At the time, one daughter was working at a rape crisis centre, the other at a vet's office.

Every time there was a wedding or a funeral, she'd fly home to open the only lounge in the area.

There are ties that go both ways, regardless of the distance. And Fort Mac is on Eastern Canadian minds and lips today.

Russell Wangersky is the Atlantic region columnist for TC Media.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Of course Alberta's wildfire is political. Everything is political.

Burnt-out cars, charred and flattened homes, air soft with smoke in a grey-hued sunrise. The fire had eaten much on its first terrible day, before growing ever wilder and uncontrolled.

"It was just like an apocalypse," one man told CBC Radio, of the walls of flame that lined the highways and kissed the treetops and the black inferno sky above Fort McMurray: the heart of the oilsands.

Until submerged in a fire of biblical proportions, Fort Mac had long functioned as a kind of shorthand for Alberta vs. Canada animosity. The place where bitumen was squeezed from sand, imagined and unvisited by most Canadians who nonetheless hold some opinion about our economic dependence on the oil industry and the threat of climate change.

(Never mind that Fort Mac runs on the work of average Canadians, the brains of the oilsands reside elsewhere.)

Local fire chief Darby Allen called it a "nasty, dirty" fire, adjectives uttered in the past to describe the belabored way oil companies extract their resource from the land, transforming it.

And that metaphor, of Fort McMurray as the heart of oilsands darkness, was on the minds of some as the fire broke: "I'm glad the #FortMacFire is happening in the province most responsible for causing climate change that caused the fire in the first place," tweeted one Vancouver man, displaying gross callousness, even if many others had already, silently, seen a terrible irony.

Far more measured was Elizabeth May who, pressed by reporters, called it "a disaster that is very related to the global climate crisis," according to the National Observer.

Most perversely, some even accused a "disgusting" Alberta Premier Rachel Notley of using the fire to appear to care about an oil town in a display of crass opportunism.

The larger story, of course, has been national dismay at the unfolding tragedy and an unusually united amount of love flowing towards the oil rigs.

But wistful calls for everyone to set aside politics ring false. A wildfire may be indiscriminate, but people and places are always political. Inevitably, they taint events, and they will taint this, too.

Before it is satiated, the fire will devastate tens of thousands of people, and the miracle is that no one has died.

The politics is, as always, as you see it. As for any kind of reckoning, the most important is to come, when those forced to flee return to tally what is left of their lives.

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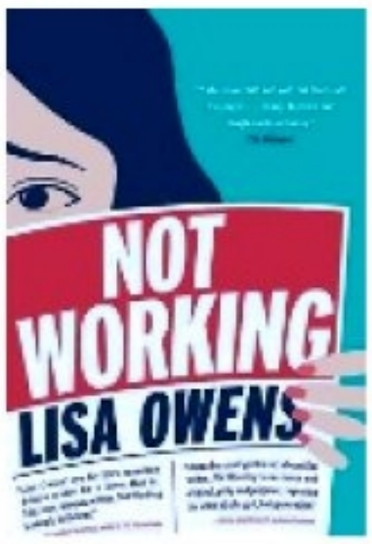
A three-billion-year-old diamond the size of a tennis ball could fetch more than $90 million when Canadian mining company Lucara Diamond Corp. puts it up for auction this summer.

You are not what you do

INTERVIEW

Chasing a dream job becomes futile for character

Melita Kuburas
Metro | Canada



A friend and former colleague who works in journalism once explained her theory about the difference between a "dream job" and a "fantasy job."

The dream job is attainable; it's something you work towards, she says. A fantasy job is what you wish you were doing when you're totally burnt out. (Hers was municipal parks worker. Mine? Marine biologist.)

But for many adults who don't have a defined career path, the dream job, too, might as well be imaginary.

That's the case in Not Working, the first novel from Lisa Owens, 30, in which the main character Claire Flannery quits a "creative communications" job she dislikes to figure out what she really wants to do.

Claire's time off is spent loitering in coffee shops, pressuring busy friends into just *one more* drink at the bar, and watching grotesque online videos.

"She has this grand idea that it's going to be this journey of self-discovery that she can direct, and that she can make herself a better person. Instead it becomes this introspective time of inertia," says Owens.

Her character is smart but self-destructive — a lovable screwball with knack for pointed observation, even in a hungover state.

"Did you not even get *dressed*?" asks Claire's boyfriend, a doctor, as he comes home to find her re-watching a clip of a sperm whale being dissected. By this point, she has given up on Ulysses.

The idea for the story was partly influenced by a stretch of time off Owens had in between jobs a few years ago.

"I was going to go to all these art galleries and do all of this cultural stuff," says Owens. In reality, she watched a lot of TV and met friends for lunch, which wasn't fun because unlike her, they were busy.

"I was very much aware that everyone else I knew was working on a different clock. If I hadn't had a job to go back to, how would that have felt?" she says, of how the idea formed.

One impact of this ideleness on Claire is anxiety — she inspects every mole with the same suspicion she applies to her well-meaning boyfriend's attempt at words of encouragement.

Without a job and daily routine, everything else suddenly starts to come into question, says Owens, and they do for Claire. Should she be going to the gym more? Is it too late to have children? Does she even like living in London?

The character is in her late twenties, though her exact age is never specified in the book. She's relatable to anyone who has ever dreaded the question "So what do you do?" at a party.

"I think there's a certain pressure on my generation to think that you should feel like, this amazing sense of fulfillment in your day job and I think it can actually be quite dangerous and quite tough ... on people like Claire, who don't really know what that is," says Owens.

The danger, she adds, is they may feel like they're wasting away their potential by working a job that's just a 9 to 5.

"So that was definitely something I wanted to challenge — that idea that 'oh, you should just be absolutely loving everything you do.'"

Chasing a dream job, then, is probably a waste of time — it doesn't necessarily exist, says Owens.

There is a lot of pressure on her generation to find that "**dream job,**" even though that ideal 9-to-5 doesn't exist, says author **Lisa Owens, 30.** COURTESY ALEXANDER JAMES

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Stories of the variety store

DEBUT NOVEL

Author sheds light on Korean immigrant experience

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Author Ann Choi captures the shrinking generation of Korean variety-store owners in her debut novel, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety. HANDOUT

Sometimes it takes a little push from an unlikely place to fulfil a personal dream. For Ann Choi, a guidance counsellor at a Toronto high school, it came in 2007 when she asked a struggling student what he wanted to do with his life. He responded by asking her the same question right back. Not wanting to be a hypocrite, Choi answered quickly. After all, she knew exactly what she wanted: to write a book.

"That night I went home and did a lot of soul searching and from that moment on, I committed to writing," she says.

Choi also knew exactly what she wanted to write. Since the early 1990s, she had been holding onto story ideas about the Korean immigrant experience, specifically those of young women who felt torn between the demands of their parents and the desire to be a "typical" Canadian teenager. As a sociology major at University of Toronto, she had worked on a project interviewing Korean-Canadian women and discovered many shared a similar narrative. "There was a lot of frustration with cultural expectations and the immigrant dream," Choi says. "And a lot of frustration with our mothers. We felt a sense of burden because 90 per cent or more of our parents were variety-store owners."

A composite of those women, and her own life, became the inspiration for Mary — or Yu-Rhee — the protagonist of Choi's debut novel, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety, published by Simon & Schuster Canada. Mary, who lives above her parents' convenience store, struggles with hormonally charged teenage emotions and experiences, but still must act like an adult, knowing very well that her first priority is always to her family's business and livelihood — as her mother never lets her forget.

"When other kids got to hang out at the mall after school, most of us were stamping packages of instant soup or working the cash register," Choi says.

For those in the community, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety will resonate in its accuracy and details, but for those who only head into their local convenience stores for milk and newspapers, the book is a revealing look into private lives. "While most everyone knows a Korean shopkeeper, most people won't know about the story behind the counter," says Choi.

For Mary's family — and Choi's, who owned a store on Toronto's Queen West — that meant a life of where families could never eat meals together, and community get-togethers happened late at night. While growing up, Choi loved the intersection of people that came into the store, but it could also be a very scary place, as her character Mary horrifyingly learns.

Choi was also motivated to tell Mary's story to document the shrinking generation of Korean variety-store owners, as a way to both educate her own 16-year-old daughter and to draw attention to the culture for which she has such pride.

"I wanted to capture all this," she says. "The Korean variety-store generation is now dying off. Our parents sacrificed and put us through school and now, my brothers and I, we don't work in variety stores anymore. Unless we write these stories down my daughter will never know what my parents did, and I did, and what our lives were like."

"When other kids got to hang out at the mall after school, most of us were stamping packages of instant soup or working the cash register Ann Choi

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

From punchline to real person

CRIME

Former O.J. Simpson prosecutor now an author

Marcia Clark, former O.J. Simpson prosecutor, has a new book out called Blood Defense, the same year that FX miniseries American Crime Story brought the Trial of the Century back into the spotlight. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In the televised "15-month nightmare" that was the O.J. Simpson trial, Marcia Clark woke up beaten. "I was just so burnt out. I was emotionally depleted, physically depleted," says the former prosecutor. "I couldn't even conceive of walking back into the courtroom."

She became a kind of punchline, the lawyer who bungled the Trial of the Century, a perceived slam dunk out of the gate. From Saturday Night Live skits in the 1990s to a Tina Fey parody on Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt last year, Clark was a long-running joke.

But in 2016, more than 20 years later, she's newly venerated, much in thanks to the FX miniseries depicting her courtroom nightmare: American Crime Story, in which actress Sarah Paulson played the former prosecutor to much acclaim, including Clark's. "We are now understood more like real people instead of cartoons," says Clark, who credits the popular series for adding "more layers" to her media portrayal, going behind the scenes with her and legal partner Chris Darden, whom she calls her "rock" during the trial.

"Whenever there's a major public event that gets covered for a period of time everybody kind of winds up being caricatured. That happened to all of us, too."

The anthology series ended its first season in April, but the year is just beginning for Clark, who has become a successful crime novelist. Her latest is called Blood Defense and follows a criminal defence lawyer handling a high-profile double-murder case, which Clark knows a thing or two about.

The O.J. Simpson trial began in 1994 after the murders of Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and waiter Ron Goldman. Simpson was acquitted of all charges after a defence team led by Johnnie Cochran presented the argument he'd been framed by a racist LAPD, a strategy that many feel distracted from the victims.

"Ron and Nicole were the only two words not spoken in that trial," says Clark.

Dubbed the "Trial of the Century," it was one of the most publicized trials in American history and high profile was what Clark had always wanted as part of the Special Trials Unit in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. "High profile meant that maybe a reporter showed up at the arraignment. Your picture was never taken. They barely got your name right if they mentioned your name at all: that was high profile," she says.

> **We are now understood more like real people instead of cartoons.**
> Marcia Clark

But for Clark on the O.J. trial, high profile meant public scrutiny. Naturally, watching the show brought on a "weird mix of emotions," she says. "It's very difficult to go back and remember everything. It digs up all the memories; the pain and the sadness, and the sense of futility that we felt for the whole tenancy of the case."

She'll be reminded again in June, when CTV and ESPN air a new documentary called O.J.: Made in America.

But a silver lining for the formerly misunderstood attorney is that she's become a kind of millennial idol with the FX series. Many of the show's viewers were in diapers when the trial made headlines. They're watching with a different, "much hipper" perspective than their parents, Clark has noticed.

As for the man at the centre of her televised nightmare two decades ago, Simpson is in prison on unrelated charges and is eligible for parole in 2017.

Is there any doubt in Clark's mind that he committed those murders in 1994? "How could there be any?" she asks. "None."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

The Good Witch lulls viewers into a Chardonnay coma

THE SHOW: Good Witch, Season 2, Episode 2 (W)
THE MOMENT: Cassie's advice

The Good Witch has Cassie Nightingale smiling enigmatically — a lot. CONTRIBUTED

Cassie Nightingale (Catherine Bell), who magically sells customers whatever they need, is training a new salesgirl in her store (or rather, shoppe), Bell Book and Candle — located on Main Street in Middleton, USA, where it's always Christmas or Halloween. The salesgirl had some accident with her hands, which prevents her from pursuing her dream job. (Or something like that. I might have dozed off. Trust me, it doesn't matter.)

"How can I help?" the salesgirl asks.

"Oh, there's always something to be done at the Bell Book and Candle," Cassie says, smiling enigmatically.

Sure enough, the salesgirl solders a glass box. She's cured!

I have to apologize to the women of North America. I knew you were tired, but I didn't know you were this tired. The only reason anyone could watch this show is that they're so stressed, they need this tranquilizer in television form.

Every moment of the series is the same moment, engineered to lull viewers into a Chardonnay coma: Somebody asks Cassie what he/she should do, and she smiles enigmatically (her sole expression, because her face is frozen stiff).

I actually worry about Good Witch falling into the wrong hands — this is some weapons-grade treacle. Vladimir Putin could become the showrunner, bore us into submissive somnolence, and take over Canada while we nap.

So if you're ever on the subway home thinking, "I'm so wrung out, maybe I'll watch Good Witch," call me instead and I'll come brush your hair. No one should be this tired.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Husband and wife team share secrets of The Good Wife

INTERVIEW

As series is about to wrap, couple talks their trade

Will The Good Wife's current crisis reunite Alicia with Peter? CONTRIBUTED

As The Good Wife comes in for a landing after seven seasons, it finds its namesake heroine, Alicia Florrick, facing the same dilemma as when it began: defending her husband, now the governor of Illinois, who is mired in a scandal that could send him back to prison.

Will this crisis reunite Alicia (played by Julianna Margulies) with Peter (Chris Noth), from whom she's been estranged as he awaits a jury's verdict?

Or will she finally divorce the man who, in the series' 2009 premiere, was the disgraced Chicago-area state's attorney heading to prison for corruption involving prostitutes?

After all these years as a dutiful lawyer, mother and wife, what will be Alicia's future path?

All presumably will be revealed when The Good Wife concludes Sunday at 9 p.m. EDT on CBS and Global. A legal drama and much more, The Good Wife has been that rare program on a mainstream broadcast network that could stand alongside the cable-network exotica certifying television's new golden age.

The Good Wife has always been genre-defying, neither a copy of anything that came before or, thus far, tempting any programmer to try to copy it.

How could that be?

Robert and Michelle King — the show's creators and executive producers and thusband-and-wife team — recently mused on what made The Good Wife so good.

A robust universe of characters

It's "really tricky" to maintain, said Michelle. "You tell serialized stories with not just your core cast, but with ancillary characters who aren't regular, and you don't have access to those actors on a regular basis.

But we wanted to be able to tell what's going on not only with Alicia, say, but also with her mom (Stockard Channing) and her brother (Dallas Roberts)," just two of the show's countless recurring characters. "It becomes a real challenge for everyone in the production to juggle all those actors' schedules."

Splendid actors inhabiting complex roles

"The writing sets a tone for the actors and then gets out of the way," said Robert. "For instance, in our fourth-ever episode we needed an antagonist, but instead of a mean and angry male lawyer, we thought, 'What if it's a pregnant woman, and what if she uses her pregnancy to break up depositions whenever she wants to: "I feel a pain!"'

"Then we brought in Martha Plimpton, who sent that idea into the stratosphere. THEN we needed to have her back, because we wanted to know more of who this character is and more of what Martha would do with it."

Soap with sophistication

The narrative digs deep. At the same time, it snacks on melodrama as viewers join the show's creators in having their cake and eating it too.

"We want the actors to have real reactions, even to ludicrous events," Robert said.

"In the beginning, viewers were commenting on how the lawyers kept winning cases, which is not very realistic.

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Fiberglass igloos being used by Hawaiian church as form of non-profit housing

Located along the water's edge on Queens Quay East in the developing East Bayfront neighbourhood, phase III of the Bayside condominiums will be defined by its unique L-shaped design. Right: Designed by Core Architects, 297 College has a west-facing facade featuring a collage of bright glass panels. TRIDEL; CORE ARCHITECTS

Where architects get their ideas from

CONDO TRENDS

Firms find inspiration in cottages, coloured glass

Duncan McAllister
For Metro Canada

What makes a truly great condo design? We asked some of Toronto's foremost architects about design and architectural cues that set their projects apart from the rest.

Developers Hines and Tridel have recently retained the award-winning Danish firm 3XN for their latest waterfront residential project at Bayside.

3XN founder and senior partner Kim Herforth Nielsen was in Toronto recently to take the wraps off the images and details of Toronto's newest vertical neighbourhood on the water's edge.

"Our premise is that architecture changes behavior," explains Herforth Nielsen. "Instead of working with buildings where everything is disconnected between the floors, we try to connect them, because if the buildings are connected inside, then the people are connected inside."

> **We take these cottages and stack them up so we have this feeling of having a small garden outside your apartment.**
> Kim Herforth Nielsen, 3XN

Nielsen and his team were inspired by a trip to Ward's Island.

"We took the ferry to Toronto Island to look back on the site. What we learned was that they have these small cottages over there, and we tried to implement them in this building as well. So we take these cottages and stack them up so we have this feeling of having a small garden outside your apartment."

Babak Eslahjou is a principal partner of Core Architects, a studio that's very active on the Toronto condo scene. He says that there are many layers to making a great building.

"Most importantly is how it responds to the needs of the users."

One of their latest projects, 297 College, is located just west of Spadina.

The west-facing facade of the building features an interesting collage of glass panels that is exposed to sunlight during the day.

"What we thought would be interesting is to have all of the balconies facing that side to have different colours of glass, so that at a certain time during the day the sun is going right through that glass and is hitting College Street with all kinds of colours." explains Eslahjou.

Closer to Yorkville, Mizrahi Developments is planning a nine-storey midrise boutique condominium located on the northwest corner of Hazelton Avenue and Davenport Road.

Designed by AUDAX architecture + design, the building is as a modern interpretation of a classical 19th century European building typology and features a rich material palette of masonry and metals.

AUDAX is an award-winning architecture and interior design studio under the leadership of company founder, Gianpiero Pugliese.

The firm's work is motivated by Human Architecture, a unique approach that combines the best elements of traditional architecture with a modern aesthetic.

REAL ESTATE

What's hot on the market in Toronto this week

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3 OPEN HOUSE

Lawrence Park: A fabulous two-storey brick home in Toronto's Lawrence Park neighbourhood will be shown this weekend. Check it out at 452 St. Clements Ave., May 7 and 8 from 2 to 4 p.m. CONTACT: DAVID BATORI, RE/MAX HALLMARK BATORI GROUP INC., BROKERAGE., 416-727-7283

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Project overview

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Building features

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In the neighbourhood

The community is close to all of Markham's many amenities, including the Boxgrove Centre shopping mall, restaurants, medical services and community centres. Outdoor lovers will enjoy access to the 63 kilometres of the Rouge River Trail System.

Location and transit

Located in the original community of Box Grove, public transportation options include several YRT bus routes, and the Unionville GO Station. Getting to Hwy. 407 is quick and easy. Commuters can be downtown within 45 minutes. DUNCAN MCALLISTER/FOR METRO

NEED TO KNOW

What: Boxgrove Village
Builder: Arista Homes
Architect: Hunt Design Associates Inc.
Designer: Gordana Carr
Location: 110 Copper Creek Dr., in Markham
Building: 124 traditional and 71 live-work townhomes
Sizes: 1,682 to 4,000 square feet.
Pricing: Anticipated from the upper $700,000s
Suites: From two- to four-bedroom layouts
Status: Pre-construction, registration phase
Occupancy: Winter of 2018
Sales Centre: 110 Copper Creek Dr., Markham
Phone: 905-660-5000
Website: boxgrovetowns.com

First-time homebuyers tips

Plan ahead, expect the unexpected, says real-estate expert

Plan ahead when looking to buy a home by setting a budget to account for emergencies and little extras. ISTOCK

Buying your first home is an emotional time. The entire process of viewings, making offers and finally getting the keys is full of excitement, fear and anticipation. First-time homebuyers — or "property virgins," as they were called on the hit HGTV show — have a lot to learn as they navigate the real-estate waters for the first time. Erica Nielsen, VP of Home Equity Financing at RBC, offers five pieces of wisdom to help buy with confidence:

1. Know what you can afford
Many first-time buyers start their home search by asking what neighbourhood they want to live in. "This can lead to disappointment," says Nielsen. "They get their heart set on a certain neighbourhood and then find out they cannot afford it." Be realistic about what you can afford and look for homes within that price range.

2. Consider the hidden costs
There's more to the cost of owning a home than just your mortgage and utilities. "There's the first time you go to shovel your walk and realize you don't have a snow shovel," says Nielsen. While a shovel is a small expense, add to that a lawn mower to cut your grass, painting supplies, and all the miscellaneous items that come with owning a home — not to mention maintenance costs — and you could end up spending a couple of thousand dollars a year that you hadn't anticipated.

3. Seek advice from various people
Buying your first home can be a daunting experience. Surround yourself with people who can provide you with advice on everything from how to purchase your home to how to secure financing and ultimately how to maintain your property. "It's the single biggest expense you're ever going to have in your life," says Nielsen. "You need all these kinds of specialists in your community to provide you with the competence for that purchase."

4. Keep your lifestyle in mind
Mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities ... all these bills and more can seriously change the lifestyle you've grown accustomed to. Consider how much you spend on entertainment, education and vacations and ask yourself what you're willing to give up to own your own home. "Sometimes that means waiting longer, saving more before you get into the market," says Nielsen, who advises first-time buyers to consider all the components that make for a satisfying life and weigh these against home ownership.

5. Look ahead
When Nielsen and her husband purchased their first home, their financial adviser asked her to consider what her life would look like several years down the road and to purchase the biggest house she could afford rather than settling for a "starter home." Nielsen sat on the sidelines for a while until she was able to save enough money to buy a family home with an extra bedroom. "That allowed us to have two children and not have to move," she says.

1. Eligible mortgage applications must meet our standard lending criteria and be started April 4 to July 8, 2016. Rate commitment is a maximum of 120 days from start of application at which point interest rate guarantee expires. This offer may be withdrawn at any time without notice. 2. Offer limited to new 4 and 5 year fixed term closed residential mortgages and to eligible applicants only. Residential mortgages only. Subject to Royal Bank of Canada lending criteria for residential mortgages. Offer cannot be combined or used in conjunction with any other special offers. Other terms and conditions may apply. Employee Rates are discounted rates and are not the posted rates of Royal Bank of Canada. Employee Rates may be changed, withdrawn or extended at any time, without notice. Offer not available for construction draw mortgages or for any amendment to an existing mortgage with Royal Bank of Canada, including a portability transaction, an advance of additional funds or a renewal. ® / ™ Trademark(s) of Royal Bank of Canada. RBC and Royal Bank are registered trademarks of Royal Bank of Canada.

LEGAL MATTERS

When right-of-way is the wrong way

Jeffrey Cowan
For Metro Canada

Q: I own a home that I have found buyer interested in purchasing. When discussing with him what may be title quirks I revealed there is a right-of-way over the neighbour's lot and the neighbour has one over mine. The purchaser has made me an offer but it is conditional on getting rid of the right-of-way.

Is this even possible?

A: I have to admit this is somewhat unusual for a prospective buyer to be making the offer conditional on removal of a neighbour's right-of-way. That being said, it is something that you can get your lawyer working on in advance of the closing. Rights-of-way are quite common in urban settings and often don't make or break a deal.

Your neighbour and their lawyer will have to be involved in this matter because change will have to be effected to both legal descriptions of the adjoining properties. This is not a straightforward process. If you can get the agreement changed so it is not conditional on this 'fix,' but still needs to be done by the time the property transfers you and your lawyer, as well as your neighbour will have to be involved.

Good luck.

When figuring out how to remove a right-of-way clause in a contract, the right path is the one that involves all parties. ISTOCK

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The best of the BILDers

Bryan Tuckey
For Metro Canada

Last week our industry celebrated the many city builders in the GTA whose projects, designs and campaigns are not only providing new homes but working to grow and improve our communities.

At the 36th annual BILD Awards, we recognized 64 member companies for excellence in sales, marketing, design and construction of new homes and communities when we handed out prizes in 48 categories.

This year's program featured several modernized categories to reflect today's GTA housing market, including awards for innovation and the addition of mid-rise developments within several categories.

For Home Builder of the Year, our most coveted prize which recognizes the company that sets the standard for the rest of the industry, we celebrated two builders for the first time ever.

Today in the GTA we are building as many mid- and high-rise homes as low-rise homes due to provincial intensification policies, so it was appropriate to recognize the leading builder from each market.

For its contribution to industry innovation, exacting quality control process and outstanding employee engagement, Tridel was recognized as the year's top builder in the mid- and high-rise market. Tridel also won the inaugural award for Best Customer Care and was named Green Builder of the Year. In 2015, the company built 1,150 new homes in more than 10 million square feet of LEED certified buildings.

Great Gulf Homes was awarded the title in the low-rise category for its commitment to exceptional architectural design and building quality, considerable philanthropic activities and customer service excellence.

The uniquely designed mixed-used condominium development Art Shoppe Lofts + Condos by Freed Developments and Capital Developments won the Project of the Year Mid/High-rise award. This distinction recognizes projects that best combine excellence in design and marketing while exemplifying quality and innovation.

Innovation was a major theme at this year's BILD Awards, with an emphasis on recognizing architectural design.

Innovation was a major theme at this year's BILD Awards, with an emphasis on recognizing architectural design that is increasing housing choices for entry-level consumers.

The award for Best Innovative Suite Design went to Building Capital Inc. for SmartStudios, a modestly priced 274-square-foot condo showcasing multi-purpose features within the University Studios project in Oshawa.

This is just a small sample of the award winners and the great work being done by the entire home building and land development industry in the GTA. To learn more and see the complete list of winners visit bildblogs.com.

BRYAN TUCKEY IS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AND A LAND-USE PLANNER WHO HAS WORKED FOR MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER @BILDGTA, FACEBOOK.COM/BILDGTA, AND BILDBLOGS.CA.

How to prepare soil for your garden

Proper soil prep not only helps seeds germinate and plants grow, it also helps keep disease and insect infestations to a minimum so you can later reap a bountiful harvest. MARKCULLEN.COM

GREEN THUMB

A great yard starts with the right dirt

Mark Cullen
For Torstar News Service

You dream of an amazing garden. Perhaps, in your mind's eye, you can see plants loaded with colour, others hanging with fruit and vegetables. You see birds and butterflies choosing your space as their home this summer.

All gardeners have these dreams. For me, these dreams are mostly reality — though gardening season never unfolds quite like I imagine during the snow-filled days of winter. The disappointments, though, are always balanced off with good surprises: Mother Nature is like that, never predictable.

One thing I can predict is this: if you prepare well the soil in which you plant, you are far more likely to see your gardening dreams become reality.

First, you should be composting. Why compost? Consider what compost is: decomposed natural material. Your banana peels, egg shells and coffee grounds break down to a higher purpose. As they rot, they marry up with other organic materials, water and oxygen to become alive with the most precious things in life: microbes, beneficial bacteria, insects (including earthworms) and mycorrhiza, a fungus.

All farmers, but organic farmers in particular, know when they add nutrients to the soil amazing things happen. Seeds germinate, plants grow and disease and insect infestations are minimized (no, they don't go away). In short, the soil is to plants what the dinner table is to humans. It's where they go to get life.

This is the perfect time to prepare for planting. Here are my soil-enhancement tips:

Spread it deep

Last year's garden used up much of the nutrition in the soil. Now is the time to replenish it with generous quantities of finished compost. Compost from your composting unit works, but generally there is precious little of it to show for all of your trekking out there with kitchen scraps. Acquire quality compost by the 20-kilogram bag at your favourite garden retailer and look for composted cattle or sheep manure that is certified by the Compost Quality Alliance. Bio Max is the trade name and this is the good stuff.

> **You will allow the myriad colonies of earthworms in your yard to do their job.**
> Mark Cullen on composting

Earthworms

Let the earthworms turn your compost under the soil for you. By merely spreading compost over existing garden beds and relaxing, you will allow the myriad colonies of earthworms in your yard to do their job: they are the foot soldiers of the garden. Within about six weeks they will have pulled the compost down into the subsoil and converted it into earthworm magic: castings, digested organic matter passed by earthworms.

Add castings

For a long time earthworm castings were considered expensive and were hard to find. A fishing-worm supplier in Burlington, Ont., has changed that and now you can buy a five-litre bag of earthworm castings for about $8 at the hardware store. I mix one part castings with 10 parts compost.

Prepare the hole

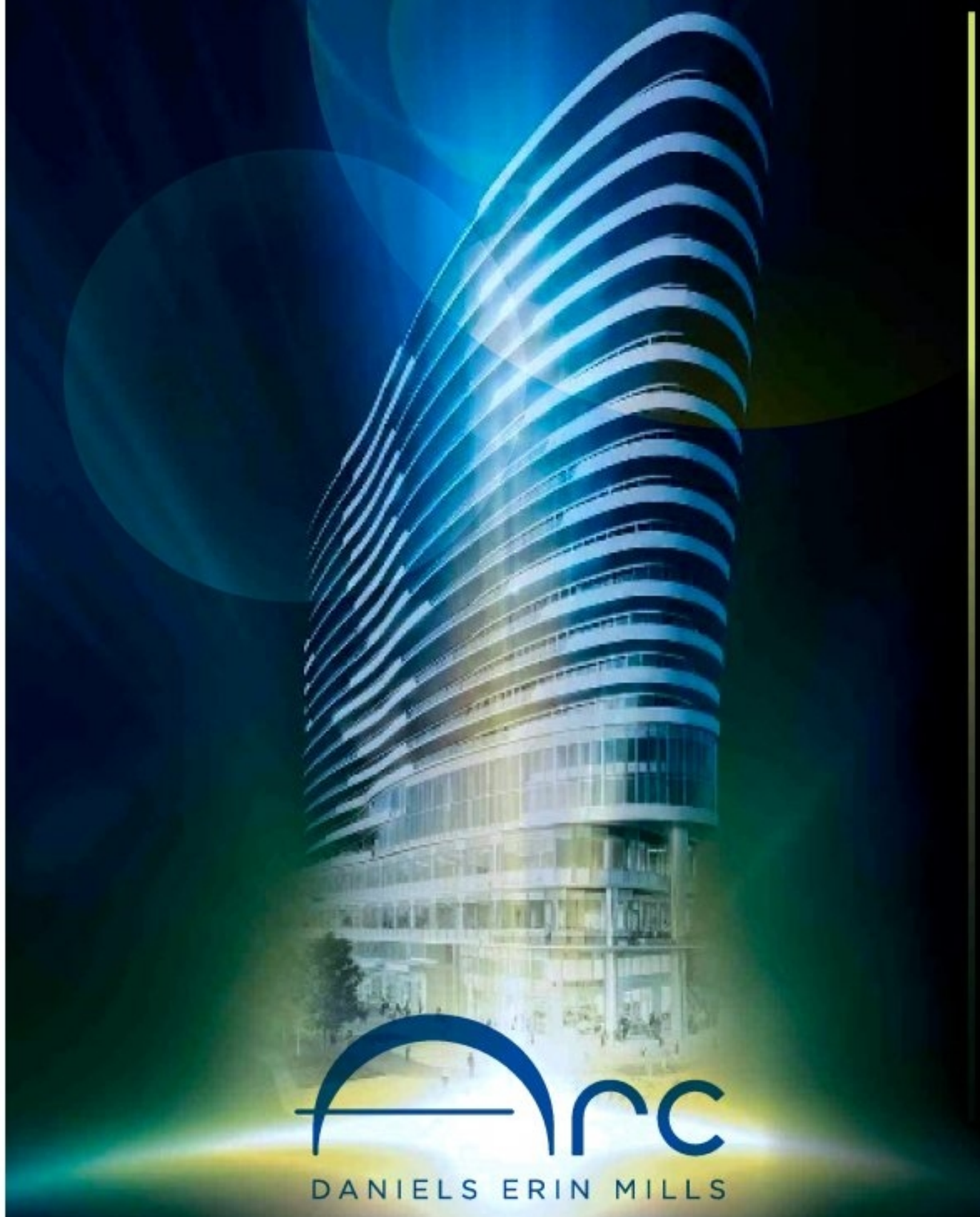
You will be digging holes for larger plants that also require soil preparation. Dig the hole more wide than deep as most roots spread horizontally. A hole that is three times as wide as the root mass of the plant and two times as deep is perfect. Back fill the hole with 2/3 soil and 1/3 compost and a scoop or two of worm castings, or purchase a quality pre-mixed garden soil and add one part worm castings to 10 parts new soil.

Mark Cullen is an expert gardener, author and broadcaster.

COMING THIS SPRING

THE NEW SHAPE

OF ERIN MILLS



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DIY heirloom tea towels for mom

CRAFTING

Favourite recipe can be ironed on

Pretty tea towels are a useful addition to any kitchen and are extra special when printed with cherished family recipes.

Turn treasured recipes into thoughtful keepsake gifts perfect for Mother's Day using iron-on transfers.

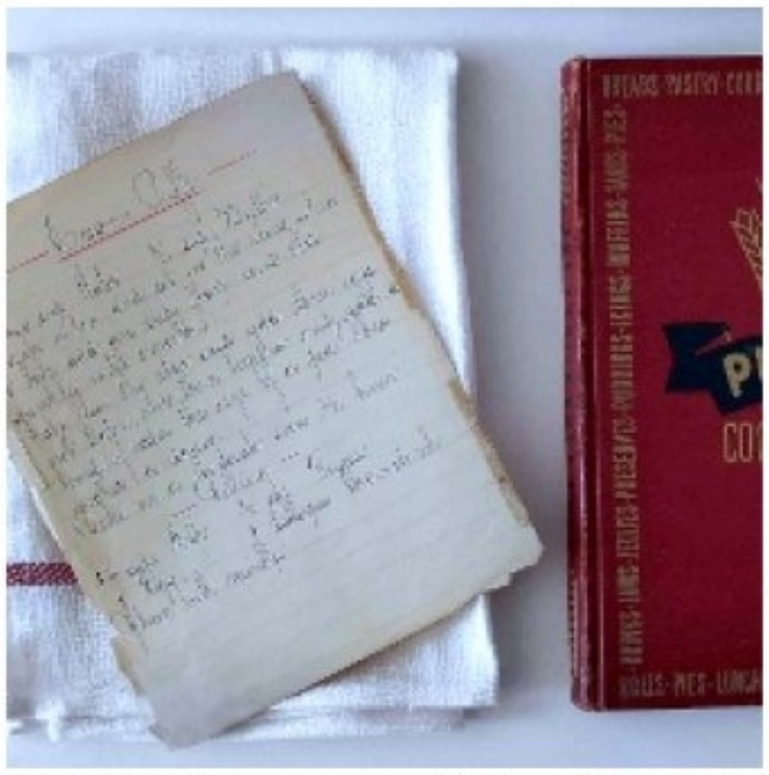
Raid your family's recipe box for that treasured recipe to make these gorgeous towels.

Then wrap them up with baker's twine with a special cookbook and you've created a unique gift.

Step 1: Gather and shop for the supplies

You will need:

- A cotton or linen tea towel
- Iron-on transfers for light-coloured fabric
- Handwritten recipe
- Iron (you don't need a steam setting)
- A scanner, computer and printer



Writing out a recipe in your own writing, even if you got it from a cookbook, gives the tea towels a personal touch.
DEBRA NORTON/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Step 2: Choose a recipe and scan it into a computer

Scan the recipe. We scanned the image in colour and again in black and white. Alter the image using image software if you like.

Step 3: Print it out

Before selecting the image to be printed ensure that you remember to "mirror" or "flip" the image so that it prints backwards. When you iron it onto the fabric it will appear the correct way. Print the image onto the transfer paper according to the manufacturer's directions.

REMEMBER
Ensure that you "mirror" or "flip" the image so that it prints backwards and the recipe can be read.

Step 4: Trim the printed design

If desired, trim the printed design, leaving approximately 1 inch (2.5 centimetres) around the printed area.

Step 5: Place and iron the design onto the tea towel

Place the printed design print side down onto the fabric. Iron the design on to the fabric according to the manufacturer's directions (do not use a steam setting).

Let cool. Carefully peel away the backing paper to reveal the design.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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When decluttering, something's gotta give

HOME ORGANIZATION

Getting rid of excess stuff is liberating, experts say

Tanya Enberg

If you're dealing with a home long overdue for a makeover, remember this: The items you remove may be more important than the ones you bring in.

Yes, lately it seems the war against too-much stuff and clutter is reaching new heights, thanks to the meteoric rise of Marie Kondo, a tidying guru and author of the New York Times bestseller, The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing.

Kondo's lessons include a how-to guide for creating the perfect sock drawer and dismissing, with gratitude, any item that no longer sparks joy.

But while creating serene, functional spaces may seem like a refined art of late, it's certainly nothing new.

Since 2005, Clare Kumar has been making personal spaces feel lighter and more manageable through her professional organizing company, Streamlife. To achieve this, usually something's gotta give.

In other words, the process likely involves hauling some stuff out.

The first step, however, is deciding how a particular space will be used.

"Is it music, television, is it game playing, is it reading?" asked Kumar.

"What are the three to five activities you hope to accomplish in that space? Then, identify how you want that space to feel and how many visual things you have around you."

Professional organizer Clare Kumar says to set priorities when decluttering. JONATHAN NICHOLLS

Once those priorities are set, she says you can begin to "liberate" items that no longer have purpose.

"It's much easier to let go if you've got your priorities clear in your mind," she explained.

"Instead of the angst of letting go, I like to look at it as setting something free so maybe someone else can enjoy it, and maybe that also liberates your space to embrace those things you've chosen as priorities for the life you're living now, not the life you used to live. Is it really doing what it needs to do for you?"

Growing up, Erinn Clark was taught the value of organized living.

Her mother, a dedicated minimalist, was known to appear with a garbage bag in hand and ask Clark and her siblings to toss out toys they no longer used.

The family often shopped at second-hand stores and exchanged modest gifts on special occasions. Her parents preferred to give "experiences over stuff," she recalled.

"There was always a special toy or two, but the big gift was driving to Buffalo and getting a night in a hotel with a swimming pool," said Clark.

Those early lessons stuck.

Clark and her husband strive to pass them along to their three children, ages four, six and eight, though it hasn't always been easy.

"Our first real battle was when we had our first child," said Clark.

"At the time, we lived in a 700-square-foot bungalow and we really didn't have much space. We received so many hand-me-downs and gifts, clothes, toys and stuffed animals, it was getting incredibly overwhelming."

According to Kumar, a common roadblock to parting with our belongings is guilt.

"It might be something that you've paid a lot of money for, so you're feeling guilty about that," she said.

"There is a lot of permission that comes into this, for people to give themselves permission to let go of x, y and z and say, this is my life and my space and I get to shape it."

Clark and her husband quickly made peace with clearing out unnecessary items.

"Gifts were the hardest to deal with because there was a feeling of needing to appreciate them, but we just didn't have room for everything," she says.

"We began re-gifting, passing them along, or donating to charitable organizations. At first, we felt kind of guilty for passing along brand new baby gifts, but soon it felt pretty good to get it out of the house."

Recently, the family moved from Toronto to Vietnam, a process that forced them to closely re-examine their belongings.

They kept the items they used daily, along with expensive ones they would use in the future, and a few personal treasures, including sweaters hand knit by family members and artwork made by their children.

"All the rest can go because we know someone else might find it more useful than us or might love it more than us," Clark said

Moving or undergoing home renovations are common catalysts for finally dealing with accumulation, Kumar says.

"I can't tell you the number of homes I've been in that have had a main-floor renovation and before it started, they put everything in the basement instead of making long-term decisions for it — they're deferring decisions."

When reimagining a space, less is often more, says Kumar.

"Work to understand what the space can take and how much you have to let go to preserve the vision you're aiming for," she said.

"It might mean reducing 30 per cent."

Lynn MacDonald and her husband regularly clean house. With two girls, ages three and six, MacDonald says it's an "ongoing process."

"We are a busy working family and things get messy by the weekend. We try to do a family clean and decluttering, sending items to the charity shop or handing clothes down to friends, as part of our routine.

"My husband can't stand clutter. I bought him the Kondo book, he read it straight away, and I know he is aching to send it to the charity shop, but I am insisting he holds onto it until I have a chance for a good read of it."

CLARE KUMAR'S FOUR-STEP 'PLAN'

P: Is for 'prioritize.' Map out how you want to use a room and how you want it to feel.
L: Is for 'liberate.' This means letting go of pieces that no longer serve a purpose for the life you want to live.
A: Is for 'arrange.' This means organizing the furniture and contents you've chosen to keep. Aim to make items accessible and well preserved.
N: Is for 'nurture.' Take care of your belongings, put them away and "regularly edit, examine consumption patterns so you're not creating this pressure situation again," Kumar advised.

BUILD ON WHAT YOU'VE GOT

How home additions are stacking up

With real-estate markets varying across the country, the days of buying a starter home and then moving as the family grows may be over — or at least, on hold.

Additions or extensions to the home are becoming increasingly common, says HGTV interior designer and contractor Melissa Davis. This is especially the case in urban centres where homes are older, and smaller.

"Homeowners stick with the house and make it what they need it to be as their family grows and their finances improve," Davis said.

The most common additions include adding a living room beyond the kitchen at the back of a home, or moving the kitchen from elsewhere so it opens onto the backyard or garden, Davis says.

"The trend is to do the back elevation on the main floor as all glass," she said. "If it's a more traditional home, it's a series of French doors, and if it's a modern home they will go with the accordion doors."

With a two-level addition, the second-storey typically includes turning a smaller bedroom into a master suite, complete with a walk-in closet and spa bathroom that has a separate shower and big soaker tub, she said.

Before work on an addition can get started, however, there are mandatory steps homeowners must follow. That process typically starts at city hall.

There's a cap on how much structure can exist on a given lot, and that can vary by neighbourhood.

If your city says your home has maxed out its allowable space, or if your plans for the addition go beyond what the zoning bylaw allows, all is not lost, says contractor Evan Bramson of Bramson Construction.

You can apply for an adjustment by submitting your architect's plans to a city adjustments committee.

"Typically, the rules are if another neighbour has already been awarded an adjustment similar to the one you're asking for, you're likely to get it," he said.

Once that is done, a contractor will want to see that proper checks have been done for wires and pipes underground, Bramson says.

When work begins, you can leave more than the construction to the contractor, he says. Let them lead what he calls "neighbour relations" as work gets started, the noise gets louder and the neighbourhood gets dustier.

"The best person for the neighbours to be mad at is the general contractor because I'm going to leave and not be there ever again," Bramson said. "But the homeowner has to live with that neighbour for the rest of their lives."

ANDREA JANUS

$250/sq. ft.

Additions cost about $250 per square foot, says HGTV's Melissa Davis. You can save by sticking with a single level, but homeowners may regret not doing the second storey at the same time, she says.

Common additions open up a home to the backyard. CONTRIBUTED

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These plants have personality

IN BLOOM

This year's garden picks are breeds of their own

Tara Nolan

Just as many factors determine today's fashion trends, great effort goes into deciding which hot new plant varieties will make it onto garden centre shelves or into a seed catalogue.

Not only are aesthetics key, but a plant must also prove it will perform well in a home gardener's plot. Everything from disease resistance to hardiness is considered. Trial gardens throughout North America play host to interesting new breeds that will eventually make their way to retail.

Here are a few new plants, from ornamental flowers and foliage to unconventional edibles that a nursery or garden centre near you may showcase this season.

Climbing Phoenix nasturtiums do triple duty in the garden: They're edible, attract pollinators and trap bad bugs. RENEE'S GARDEN

Ornamental blooms

The Perennial Plant Association (perennialplant.org) named Japanese anemone "Honorine Jobert" as the Perennial Plant of the Year. What's great about this plant — besides its stunning white flowers — is that it blooms from late summer to mid fall. With a little planning, your garden can be in bloom from spring until the snow flies. Try to choose plants with bloom times from early spring to late fall. A plant tag will reveal all the information you need.

For container gardening, the Supertunia Pink Star Charm petunia hybrid from Proven Winners (provenwinners.com) does not require deadheading like a traditional petunia. I tested this new-for-2016 introduction last year and this vigorous bloomer was producing flowers well into the fall.

Similarly, the "Holy Moly" calibrachoa superbells, which are bright yellow and fuchsia, are fairly low maintenance and should bloom all season long.

And this is pretty cool: Nova Scotia-based garden writer Niki Jabbour, author of The Year-Round Vegetable Gardener, had a daylily named after her by mail-order company Harbour Breezes (harbourbreezes.ca). "Niki Jabbour" has gorgeous peach blooms with splashes of burgundy and pretty ruffled petals.

Fabulous foliage

When planning your garden, keep in mind, you don't have to focus on just blooms. Shop for plants with interesting foliage that will complement any flower in the garden — or in your pots.

You could also go full-on foliage and create a lovely mosaic of leafy specimens. The new Heucherella "Metallic Madness" from the PC Lawn & Garden lineup has leaves that start out a soft burgundy colour and lighten to a metallic grey-pewter hue. Flip a leaf over and its pinky underside is just as interesting.

Also keep an eye out for "Curly Fries," with its narrow, stiff, wavy leaves, which the American Hosta Growers Society chose as the 2016 Hosta of the Year.

Another great shade garden choice is "Regal Red," a new Japanese painted fern offered by Sheridan Nurseries, whose reddish foliage is sure to stand out.

Seeds to sow

Nasturtiums are fabulous triple-duty plants to have in a garden. Not only are both the leaves and flowers edible (toss them in summer salads for visual interest), they attract beneficial pollinators. Furthermore — and this is where the "triple" comes in — they can act as trap crops for bad bugs like aphids. The "Climbing Phoenix," a new variety introduced by Renee's Garden this year, has unique, pinwheel-shaped flowers in a variety of hues. And, you never know what colour you're going to get from "Dancing Ballerinas," a new type of California poppy that's also a bee magnet.

The delicate, butter-yellow blooms of Xanthos cosmos, available from Stokes Seeds, will also attract pollinators, as will the vibrant, multi-coloured Carrousel Zinnias available from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds.

SPRING CLEANING

10 tidying-up tips and techniques for a fresh start

Tools like a wet mop simplify cleaning tasks. CONTRIBUTED

Spring cleaning season is upon us. For some, the annual ritual will be a pleasure, a reminder that it's time to get ready to tackle reno ideas you've been dreaming up over the winter

For the rest of us, it's a tedious — but necessary — chore. After all, houses that have had doors and windows closed for six months are bound to be dusty, and in need of a good ventilation. Windows will be smeared. Outdoor dirt will have made its way into closets, front hallways and mudrooms, where it's made friends with dustbunnies and mislaid mittens.

Tackle spring cleaning head on and clear the way for your renovation plans or just for a fresh start. Here, then, are 10 techniques and tips to make the process as painless as possible.

1. Plan to do the work over several evenings or a couple of weekends. If you try to accomplish everything at once, you're more likely to give some tasks short shrift. Play music while you labour. Reward yourself for finishing each room with a walk in the park, or a visit to a local coffee shop with a pal or cleaning partner.

2. Decluttering is an essential step to spring cleaning. There are any number of books that posit decluttering as a spiritual practice that leads to greater self-actualization. Here's a shorter version of all of them: You have too much stuff. Get rid of some of it.

3. Nothing says spring like sunlight pouring through sparkling glass. So do yourself a favour and wash all windows, inside and out. If windows don't open indoors for cleaning, invest in a professional service to do exteriors — unless you're handy with a ladder.

For superior results, wipe off soapy water with a squeegee dipped in a vinegar and water solution, and eliminate streaks with balled up sheets of newspaper.

4. Always start at the top of each room. In the kitchen, for example, dust the ceiling or vacuum with a soft brush attachment. Dust light fixtures — don't forget the light bulbs. Then clean the tops of cabinets and appliances. Wipe walls with a soft cloth on a pole, or a Swiffer wand. Spot-clean greasy marks on walls with a mild detergent solution. Once every three years, wash all the walls. Wipe down cabinets. If you have a stone countertop that requires sealing annually, this is a good time to do it. Clean out crumbs from cutlery drawers, toasters and breadboxes.

5. Don't forget the hidden places where dirt sneakily inserts itself. Move appliances away from walls and vacuum and wash floors behind them. Clean the fridge fan coils, and the filters on the overhead exhaust. Even the dishwasher could probably do with a cleaning, using a specialty product, which gets dropped in a washing cycle to remove hard water, odours, and mineral deposits. There's also a formula to remove the musty smell front-load washers sometimes get.

6. Consolidate tools and cleaning materials in one place. Storage systems have typically been unlovely. But with a bit of research, you can find companies with decor-friendly units that can fit stylishly into just about any room in the house.

7. Stick to the basics when it comes to cleaning solutions. Vinegar and water work just fine for many jobs (Use one part vinegar to five parts water). Just don't use it on a granite or marble surface. A half-cup of baking soda mixed with a couple of gallons of water makes a good cleaner, especially for surfaces that have soapy scum. You can also try one of the many "green" cleaners on the market.

8. Wash blinds — especially those in the kitchen and bathroom. Vacuum and/or steam other window treatments. Like area rugs, the latter should only need professional cleaning every five years or so.

9. Switch out seasonal bedding. Wash, dry and store all winter bedding, using lavender or cedar chips to discourage moths. Remove mattress covers for washing and while they are off, vacuum the mattress thoroughly with a crevice attachment.

10. Simple tools are often the most effective. Consider a mop with removable, reusable pads, and an on-board container you can fill with the cleaning solution of your choice. It's safe for all floors including hardwood, vinyl, laminate and tile. A control handle on a mop lets users to easily switch between tile, vinyl, stone, and sealed hardwood and laminate cleaning options. VICKY SANDERSON

Inside out, outside in

SUMMER READY

How to turn outdoors into a summer haven

Andrea Janus

Invest in quality neutral furniture and explore colour trends with inexpensive accessories. ISTOCK

If your home has even a few square feet of outdoor space, it's that time again to tackle the job of getting it ready for the few precious months you have to enjoy it.

Getting the patio, rooftop deck or solarium summer-ready doesn't have to be a daunting task, especially if you take time to consider a key question.

Think about what function you want the space to serve, advises interior designer William MacDonald of WillMac Design. Is it a space to dine al fresco on warm summer nights, or a place to put your feet up with a glass of wine and the Sunday paper? If your space is big enough for both, great.

But in a space with limited square footage, like a solarium or a condo balcony, "it's important to make a choice," MacDonald said.

"You have to base your design ideas in reality."

Answering this question may involve spending some time in the space before making big decor investments.

"Get a stool and sit outside and see what times you like to be out there," MacDonald said.

When you're ready to move on to decor, approach the outdoor space as you would your indoor space: invest in good-quality larger pieces — like dining sets, chairs and loungers.

"It's a good investment," MacDonald said. "You'll only buy them once."

Opt for neutral tones, like black, brown, grey, white or cream, and then you can go cheap and cheerful, not to mention colourful, for accessories like outdoor rugs, pillows, poufs and blankets.

Current colour trends include jewel tones — think orange, turquoise and yellow — but softer pastels appear poised to make a comeback in the next year or two, MacDonald predicts. Dusty blue, lilac and rose make for a very traditional look, but also hold up well outdoors because they don't show dust as much as darker tones.

Whether your space is for dining or lounging, or both, everything that goes in it is affected by one key factor: the weather. Make sure your decor can withstand sun, heat, wind and rain, MacDonald says.

That means hurricane lanterns to hold candles, weatherproof fabrics like Sunbrella for pillows, cushions and umbrellas, and outdoor rugs.

And don't forget about lighting. Standing lamps work well in smaller spaces. Uplights, which sit on the ground and project lighting upward, can be planted around a garden or patio, while electric candles can be spaced at intervals around a balcony or rooftop terrace.

Finish off the look with some greenery: a handful of large outdoor planters for a big space or boxwood to line a smaller space.

TIPS FOR SAVING ON OUTDOOR DECOR

Buy off-season

Good-quality patio furniture can cost as much as indoor items, so buy your big pieces over the winter, MacDonald says. "You'll get a better price, and you'll get it on time."

Play the long game

If you can't buy everything at once, buy the big, must-have items first (tables, chairs) and add accessories as you can.

Repurpose

Buy outdoor furniture that can be brought inside to a solarium or living room for the winter, and "re-merchandize" accessories from the patio around the house. Chinese garden stools, for instance, can be added to the living room, powder room or bedroom.

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GARDENING

Small, outdoor space? Consider a raised bed

Not everyone has a traditional yard with ample space for perennial gardens and a vegetable patch. Despite this, clever green thumbs are maximizing the space they do have to grow a variety of edible crops.

Here are a few tips that will give you a head start on your garden.

A raised bed kit is ideal for small areas. DONNA GRIFFITH

Consider your space's growing conditions

Most vegetables, especially the heat seekers — tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, etc. — require at least six to eight hours of sunlight a day to bear flowers and then fruit. Take a few days to assess where the sun moves in your space throughout the day to make sure you get enough light. If your space is windy, consider using a shield to protect your plants.

One great thing about raised beds is they can be placed anywhere, making them ideal for a small, urban yard, where the soil may be poor quality. Patio stones and decks are also great space candidates. If all the sunlight happens to shine on your driveway, for example, consider a long, narrow raised bed that runs alongside or some other type of raised bed structure that will still fit when the car is parked.

Vertical gardens maximize space. DONNA GRIFFITH

Grow up, up, up!

Vertical gardening isn't a new buzzword, but it's one that continues to gain traction as green thumbs get creative with their growing structures. To grow vining veggies, install a small trellis system to train plants to grow upwards towards the sky. This also leaves more space in the actual garden to grow other things. You can also buy or build tiered structures with "drawers" you can fill with soil and plant greens, like lettuce or herbs, which thrive in a shallower space.

Upcycle a raised bed

Antique markets, your parents' backyard, these are both places where you may find items you can upcycle into a garden. Old wooden washtubs, wine barrels, wooden suitcases, you name it. Stock tanks are another modern-looking option that you can buy new or used. And an old table can easily be transformed into a mini-salad garden.

Consider gardening in fabric pots

Fabric pots come in all shapes and sizes and because they're so lightweight, they are perfect for balconies and rooftops. (Note: If you are gardening on a balcony or roof, be sure to look into weight restrictions before introducing a raised bed to the space.)

Fabric pots are easy to store. JOSHUA WHITE FOR WOOLLY POCKET

Many fabric-raised beds are deep enough to plant root vegetables. The best part is you can empty them out and fold them up (be sure they're dry first) for the winter months, pulling them out again next spring. This also makes it easier to bring your "raised bed" with you when you move. Les Urbainculteurs and Woolly Pocket have online shops that sell fabric-raised beds.

Consider a kit

Kits may seem pricey, but consider them a long-term investment. Local companies, such as Freedom Growing, offer raised bed kits perfect for a small area that gets a lot of sun, like the corner of a patio or balcony. And everything you need to put them together will be delivered right to your door. If you don't have the tools, borrow them from a neighbour or a local tool-lending library.

Some companies will deliver a raised bed kit, build it and bring along the soil required to fill it.

TARA NOLAN

The gift of her

Henrietta Walmark

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum.

An annual ritual I share with my ex-husband amuses our daughter, Sofia. On Mother's Day, he thanks me for the gift of her. And I reciprocate on Father's Day. Best thing we ever did, her father and I say to one another in earnest, to eye rolls from the object of our affection.

Sofia was 10 when her dad and I split up, but the tradition of gratitude continued with the three of us gathering for Mother's Day brunches at a local restaurant, a favourite place where we celebrated family occasions and milestones until her father moved to Indonesia six years ago.

Being Sofia's 'mum' — a British-ism acquired honestly from her very English granny — has meant having an ongoing and affectionate relationship with her dad.

That she thanks us for setting an example of mutual respect is more satisfying than any gift or a decadent meal. Which is just as well, as she is 1,400 km away studying at university and we won't be seeing each other for Mother's Day this year.

Still our mother-daughter connection runs deep. I was invited to her over-the-top 30th birthday bash last month where all the other guests were 20-something. I had a blast. The party pushed me out of my comfort zone, like so many experiences we've shared.

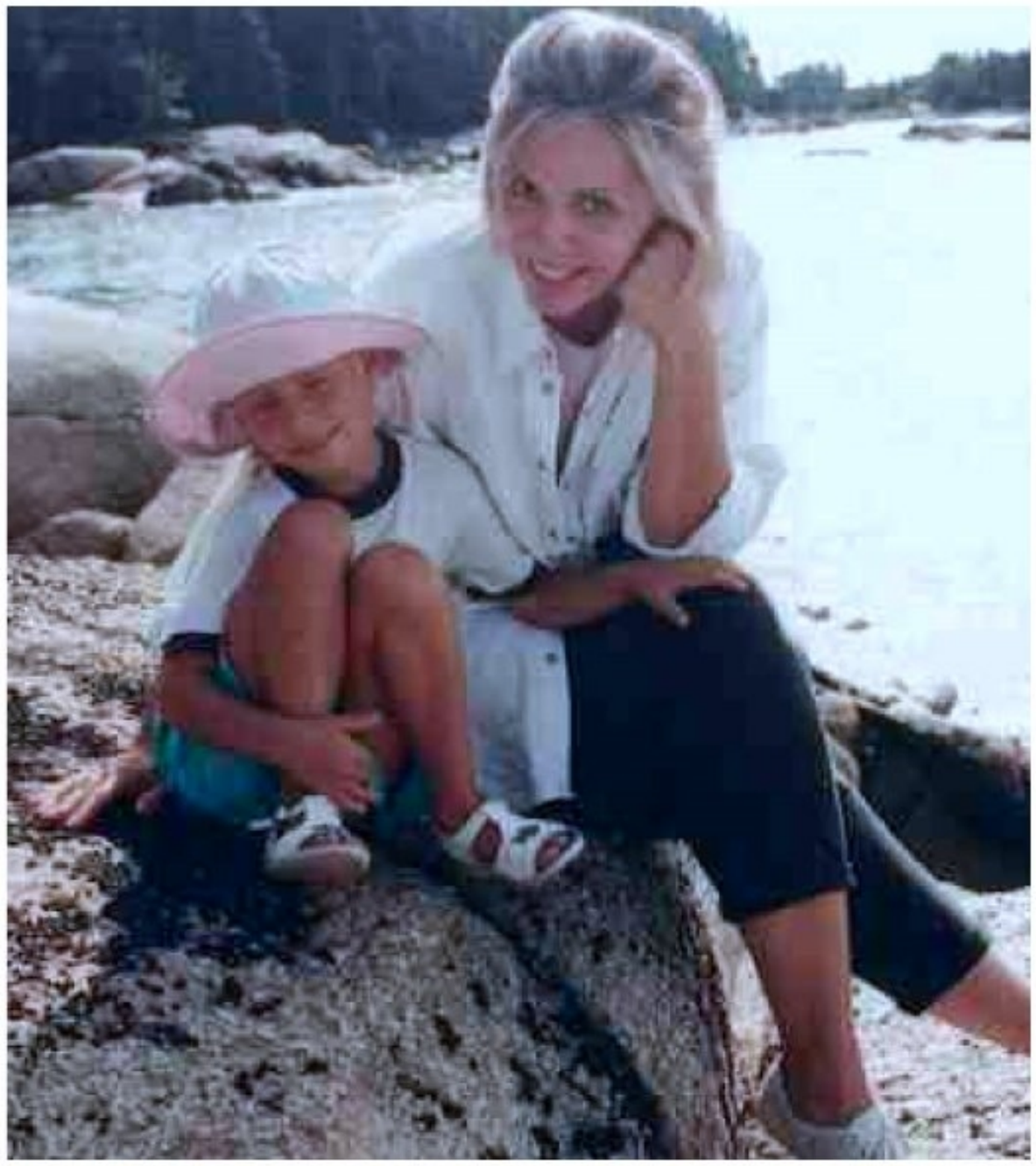
I ventured into new neighbourhoods and venues at all hours when teenage Sofia's plans went awry. She still apologizes to me for those particularly challenging years.

She introduced arty me to the beauty of pure mathematics and physics, which is what you might expect from a kid who has Euler's equation inked on the inside of her wrist.

Thanks to Sofia, I was no bourgeois soccer mom; I was a circus mom. After several years on the sidelines watching as my preteen daughter mastered flying trapeze, I was coaxed into trying it myself and then kept at it for eight years.

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum. I'll mourn a second pregnancy that ended in miscarriage. I'll think of friends who long for a child yet can't conceive, and of those who have lost their mothers. I'll remember the deep affection I shared with my former mother-in-law and her long-time companion. I'll recall last year's sweet and unexpected Mother's Day call from my former son-in-law. And I'll spend the day with my amazing mom.

Oh, and I'll be waiting to hear from Sofia's dad. I'll smile to think of Sofia rolling her eyes even though she won't be here when he thanks me yet again for the gift of her.



Henrietta Walmark with daughter Sofia — then 5, now 30 — in Maine together in 1991. CONTRIBUTED

Something a little unexpected

You've given her the tulips, a big box of chocolates, you've even wrapped up some bath salts, body wash or scented soaps. All lovely sentiments for Mother's Day. This year you're looking to give something more unique and a little unexpected. Astrid Van Den Broek shares some ideas.

FINAL TOUCH HANDS-FREE CANDY DISPENSER, $39.99, KITCHEN STUFF PLUS STORES, KITCHENSTUFFPLUS.COM

MUSE BRAIN SENSING HEADBAND – WHITE, $299, INDIGO STORES, INDIGO.CA

SWALLOW RING HOLDER, HEAD AND TAIL, $19/EACH, ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO, SHOP.AGO.NET

KSP PICNIC '4-PERSON' COOLER KNAPSACK WITH WINE HOLDER, $59.99, KITCHEN STUFF PLUS STORES, KITCHENSTUFFPLUS.COM

FUJI INSTAX MINI 8 YELLOW, $99.95, INDIGO STORES, INDIGO.CA

50 YEAR CALENDAR PAPERWEIGHT, $16.50, KIKKERLAND.COM

PEARL EARBUDS, $21.50, KIKKERLAND.COM

STAR METRO MEDIA THIS SPECIAL REPORT WAS CREATED BY CONTENT SOLUTIONS, INDEPENDENT OF METRO EDITORIAL.

The off-season is a perfect, and more affordable, time to explore Havana, Cuba. CUBA TOURISM

Ste. Anne's Spa in Grafton, Ont., sees a significant number of guests who are mothers and daughters. COURTESY OF ST. ANNES SPA

What mom wants most: memories

Vawn Himmelsbach

Sure, flowers and chocolates are nice, but what do moms really want this Mother's Day? A survey by Ebates found that 63 per cent of moms want to spend quality time with their family this Mother's Day, while one-third say they'd like a spa day. And take note: a whopping 94 per cent say they absolutely do not want a gym membership.

Whether a spa day, weekend retreat or last-minute trip, a getaway with mom isn't just about giving her some much-needed time off; it also provides bonding time with family away from the pressures of everyday life.

Judi Oracheski, owner of Gypsy Group Travel Inc. in Halifax, says she's had quite a few moms and daughters (as well as sisters) book getaways to Las Vegas, since it's an ideal destination for shopping and shows, and easily accessible from most of Canada. With a seat sale or hotel promo, a Vegas getaway can also be reasonably priced, she said.

And in May, there are typically last-minute deals to Caribbean isles such as the Dominican Republic and Cuba, as those destinations head into their off-season.

Other getaways can be tailored to mom's interests, such as theatre, arts or music. Oracheski booked a mother and daughter on a Broadway-themed trip to New York City, for example, which included tickets to Wicked and Mamma Mia.

But you don't have to leave the country to get away. "My mom and I did a three-night getaway to Quebec City once," said Oracheski. "We stayed in the Chateau Frontenac and felt like royalty. It was awesome!"

At Ste. Anne's Spa in Grafton, Ont., a significant number of guests are mothers and daughters. "However, we certainly do see an increase in the month of May," said Wanda Hoehn, the spa's director of sales and marketing. She's also seeing more multi-generational visits, with daughter, mother and grandmother.

"At a place like ours, there are really no outside distractions like phones or work and family pressures," said Hoehn. "You have the opportunity for such quality one-on-one time here, all the while enjoying soothing spa treatments, comforting cuisine and beautiful surroundings. When you are in a state of true relaxation, I think the most genuine bonding happens."

For the month of May, Ste. Anne's Spa is offering an overnight getaway that includes its popular 'maple showers' treatment (and spas across Canada are offering various Mother's Day specials and promos).

For Mother's Day, though, Hoehn recommends purchasing a gift certificate for two.

"I always think a spa retreat together is the best gift that you can give," said Hoehn, "as not only do you give the gift of relaxation, which all of us need regularly, but you give the gift of time with you — which invariably moms will cherish the most."

Something for new moms: a break

GIFTS

What most new moms really want is gratitude, and some time off

Kristen Thompson

Kristen Thompson will be celebrating Mother's Day her two daughters, Isla, 3, and Polly, now seven months. CONTRIBUTED

I barely remember my first Mother's Day.

I was four weeks into my new gig as a mom, walking around in a fog, exhausted and overwhelmed. Then one little ribbon-wrapped box from my husband turned that all around. Inside was a silver necklace with a circle pendant. On one side was my daughter's name, on the other side her birthdate. Simple, thoughtful, and heart-warming.

There's something unforgettable about the perfect gesture of love and thanks. And that can be hard to narrow down for new moms or moms-to-be, because there hasn't been much time to establish family traditions, and the kids aren't old enough to give their own glue-drenched creations.

There are unlimited gift ideas for new mamas — from hand vacuums to meal delivery services, bottles of wine and pedicure gift certificates. But at the end of the day, what most really want is gratitude, and a break.

I don't mean let them have a 20-minute shower with the door locked. I mean pack those rug rats up and get them out of the house. Before you leave, hand her a book and a coffee with Bailey's (don't skimp on the Bailey's). Give her the day off wiping noses, changing diapers and re-filling sippy cups. And thank her. Again and again, say thank you.

That's what Toronto mom Karen Leslie is hoping for.

"What I want for Mother's Day is not a grand gesture or expensive gift, but some time," she said. "Even an hour not being asked for (something). Just time to be responsible for no one, just my own needs, a bit of time to recharge."

Sudbury mom Emma Dunkley Elliott, who had her first baby in April, agrees.

"As a new mom, I'm pretty exhausted most of the time, so a relaxing day and a little pampering would be fantastic," she said. "Breakfast in bed comes to mind."

"My husband came home last week with a framed photo of me and our daughter. I was so touched I burst into tears. Amid the exhaustion and the emotions, it was such a thoughtful gesture. I think that is a great gift idea."

Jayme Selazek, 32, is due with her first baby in the beginning of June and says the most meaningful way to be celebrated is to make time together as a family.

"Gifts aren't a huge deal, so there shouldn't be a lot of pressure to give them.

But if (someone's) husband wanted to give something, I would suggest something simple (like) a … spa day. Or do something that has been on the to-do list forever. Gifts that are simple, but appreciated."

Sara Ehrhardt, a first time mom to an 11-month-old son, said the best thing spouses can for Mother's Day is listen to cues from their partners.

"For me (the perfect gift is) something to make the family function better. For others, it may be something that makes them feel less like a mom and more like a woman," she said.

"Moms can feel lonely those first years (and they) receive very little feedback while mothering babies. So … a day to be recognized feels nice."

New motherhood is different for anyone, but one universal truth is that it can feel exhausting and thankless. We spend so much time doing things for our little ones, it leaves very little time to look after ourselves.

So as much as we love presents, what we really need is a break, we need someone to cater to our needs, and we need to hear the words "You amaze me." And lots and lots of cuddles from the kids. Don't forget the cuddles.

Gift ideas for new moms

A night at a hotel
Hands down, what most want for Mother's Day is alone time. You could just take the kids out of the house for a couple hours. Or you could seriously step up your game by sending her to a hotel for the night. Many hotels offer packages that include wine and chocolate in the room, and breakfast in the morning. Bonus points for choosing one that offers spa services. Start your search at hotels.ca, which has last minute Mother's Day deals.

- Price: As low as $150
- Available a her favourite hotel, hotels.ca

What I Love About My Mom book
Just because the kids are too little to tell mom how much they appreciate her doesn't mean you can't do it for them. This little book contains fill-in-the-blank lines to describe why mom's the best. Fill it in on behalf of the kids, and it's sure to warm her heart.

- Price: $12
- Available at Indigo stores, indigo.ca.

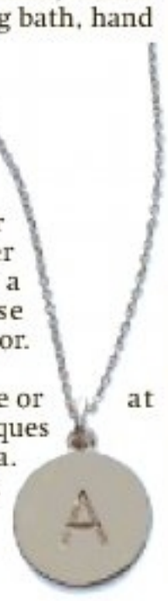
Personalized pendant necklace
A popular gift item for moms is a charm necklace with engravings of kids' names, initials or finger prints. Kate Spade has a beautiful charm necklace that allows you to engrave an initial on one side, and a small message on the back – like a child's birth dates.

- Price: $64
- Available at The Bay, thebay.com.

L'Occitane Lavender Star Gift Set
Aside from alone time, most moms say they want to feel pampered for Mother's Day. Allow her to feel pampered and relaxed from the comfort of her home with a lavender gift set from L'Occitane, which includes foaming bath, hand cream, soap, a perfumed sachet and a scented candle.

Then draw her a bath, hand her a mimosa and a book, and close the bathroom door.

- Price: $76
- Availableonline or at L'Occitane boutiques around Canada. Visit loccitane.ca.

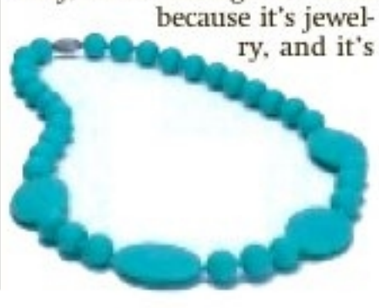


Gifts for moms-to-be

Mommy-to-be spa retreat
Pregnancy is exhausting, and leaves your body creaky and achy. So pamper her with a spa getaway specifically designed for moms-to-be. Most spas offer services catered to pregnant mamas that include prenatal massages, manicures or pedicures, and a lunch. If you're not sure where to send her, you can get her an e-gift card for spafinder.ca, which she can use at any affiliated venue.

- Price: As low as $80
- Available at her favourite local spa, spafinder.ca.

Silicone teething necklace
Sure, this one is kind of a gift for baby, but it's also a gift for mom because it's jewelry, and it's pretty. And anything that helps moms feel pretty will be appreciated, we promise. Chewbeads has a huge variety of styles and colours, and can be ordered online. Their website also has a list of retailers across Canada that carry the products.



- Price: $36.50
- Available online and at boutique baby stores across Canada. Visit chewbeads.com.

Mini tablet
If she doesn't already have a tablet, this may be invaluable during late-night feeding sessions, or when baby falls asleep in her arms on the couch. You may even want to take it out of the box and load it up with Netflix, Facebook, Pinterest, and a white noise app. The Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 is a great affordable option, with a 7-inch display and up to 32 GB of data available.

- Price: $149
- Available at Best Buy, The Source, and other electronics stores, and online. Visit samsung.com.

Danielle Nicole Kayden Satchel
If she hasn't already chosen a baby bag, this beautiful Danielle Nicole satchel is a great alternative that she'll continue to use long after hauling around diapers and sippy cups. It's roomy, has extra zip pockets, is easy to wipe down, and comes with a cross-body strap.

- Price: $98
- Available online at shop.danielle-nicole.com, and at select retailers in Canada. Visit the Danielle Nicole website for locations.

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Mother's strength helps Olympian

Vawn Himmelsbach

Rosie MacLennan always wanted to be an Olympian. And, after winning Canada's only gold medal at the 2012 Olympics in London for women's trampoline, she reached a new personal best for her final routine. But, on the road to Rio, which kicks off Aug. 3, she had a setback: a concussion that left her unable to do what she loves most.

Rosie has always relied on her mother, Jane, for emotional support, but perhaps never as much as the past year — making this Mother's Day particularly poignant. "She's definitely been a source of strength in times where there's been uncertainties," she said.

Her mother wasn't there when she fell. And Rosie didn't think to mention it — after all, it wasn't a big fall. But then the headaches started to come, along with dizziness. "When you flip 20 feet into the air, that isn't ideal," said Rosie.

But it was the emotional issues that were harder to deal with — she didn't know when, or if, she would jump again. "I had no idea if I would be back in time to compete at the World's," she said, which is the one and only chance to qualify for the Olympics.

"I was having panic attacks just because of the uncertainty," said Rosie. "Talking to my mom, she kept me grounded and kept me focused on my recovery, teaching me [that] life will go on no matter what happens." After losing five months of training, she now has a clear bill of health and is heading to Rio.

"Every mother worries about potential injury and the long-term impact on their life," said Jane. "It's a mother's job to internalize your worry and focus on solutions, to teach patience and help set priorities in the long term."

She has a lifetime of experience internalizing those worries. Years ago, when Rosie was a child, the two were in a car accident. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the car was totalled. In that moment, the first thing Jane thought of was her daughter — and she immediately tried to create a sense of calm while waiting for paramedics to arrive at the scene.

That's also her job whenever Rosie competes. It's hard for her to watch her daughter jumping so high up in the air. "I'm glad she's still on the trampoline when she finishes," she said. "I'm told I jump every time she does."

But she manages to do a good job of creating a sense of calm, because Rosie doesn't pick up on those nerves.

Rosie, who began competing internationally at the age of 11, won the Canadian National Women's Championships in 2005, 2009 and 2011. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she finished in 7th place, and went on to win a gold medal at the 2011 Pan Am Games in Mexico and second place at the 2011 Trampoline World Championships in Birmingham.

But at the 2012 Olympics in London, the pressure was on.

There were 17,000 people in the crowd and Rosie had no idea where her family was sitting. She was going over her routine in her head, when she happened to look up and see her mom in the crowd of thousands.

"I remember the instant change — I instantly felt lighter," said Rosie. "When I looked at her face, it was instant peace of mind. It gave me confidence and it reminded me I was doing what I loved." She went on to win gold.

Olympian Rosie MacLennan, right, with her mom Jane. CONTRIBUTED

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Tech mom out for Mother's Day

GADGETY GIFTS

Seven great gadget gift ideas to keep her connected

Marc Saltzman

Chocolates are sweet and flowers are thoughtful, but given the fact geek is the new chic, why not pick up mom a gadgety gift for Mother's Day?

After all, today's busy moms could probably use a high-tech hand while on the go, whether it's to stay organized, entertained or in touch with those who matter.

And unlike a spa treatment, a tech toy lasts more than an hour.

If you need some suggestions for Sunday, May 8, the following are some gadget gift ideas – ranging in price from $59 to $549.

For the workaholic

Can't decide whether mom could benefit from a laptop or tablet? You don't need to choose with the Dell Inspiron 11 3000 (from $499.99), a versatile 2-in-1 that transforms from one mode to another. When you no longer need a keyboard and trackpad, simply bend back the 11-inch screen 360 degrees and use your fingertips on the touch-screen to swipe through movies, TV shows, ebooks, games, and photos. Powered by a 6th Gen Intel Core processor, this hybrid also enjoys long battery life of up to 7 hours between charges.

For the bookworm

"Books are a uniquely portable magic," said Stephen King – and you can give the gift of magic with an ebook reader for avid readers. In fact, the Kobo Aura H20 ($179) is the first premium waterproof ereader, so it can be brought into the tub, by the pool, or to the beach. The anti-glare e-ink screen can be read clearly in bright sunlight, or take advantage of the integrated light to read while curled up in bed, rather than disturbing a sleepy partner with a night table lamp.

The Kobo eBookstore features more than four million titles, plus you can borrow ebooks for free from your local library. Battery life lasts tops two months between charges.

For creative types

Whether mom's a budding photographer, artist, writer or scrap-booker, the Epson Expression ET-2550 EcoTank All-in-One ($399) lets you print for up to two years before you need to refill the ink tanks. Yes, you read that correctly. This Wi-Fi-enabled printer/scanner/copier has an ink yield of 4,000 black and 6,500 colour prints, and can print up to 9.2 pages per minute for black and 4.5 pages for colour. And when it's time to replace the ink, each bottle only costs $18 per colour.

For the coffee lover

How nice would it be to wake up, reach for your phone or tablet and tap an app that tells your coffee machine to make you that perfect cup of Jo?

It's possible with the Nespresso OriginalLine Prodigio (from $269), the first smartphone-connected machine from the Swiss company. Using Bluetooth technology, the machine seamlessly links with the Nespresso app to allow you to prepare coffee remotely with just a few taps, plus it also helps with capsule stock management, brewing schedules, maintenance alerts, and more.

For fitness fanatics

If you think your exercise-loving mom would appreciate a more comprehensive fitness tracker than what she's using now, HTC and Under Armour have partnered to create UA HealthBox ($549), a connected health system that tracks and manages your activity, fitness, sleep, and nutrition. In the box you get a wearable UA Band (for the wrist), a UA Heart Rate monitor (with chest strap), and a smart UA Scale (measuring weight and body fat) — all of which connect wirelessly to the UA Record companion app for Android or Apple iOS.

Each device sends data to your device, illustrated on a dashboard within the app, plus you're provided with information and motivation to help achieve fitness and health goals.

For the 'socially connected' mom

Mom may want a smartwatch, but she doesn't want to sacrifice style for functionality. Engineered by HP, the Isaac Mizrahi Smartwatch ($299.99) is available in two Swarovski Crystal-outlined faces in silver and gold-tone stainless steel, and the leather strap is available in five interchangeable colours. Compatible with both iOS and Android phones, this classic watch may have an classic analog face, but it shows message notifications (calls, texts, emails), real-time calendar alerts, social media updates, pedometer and other fitness info, and much more.

For mom with a green thumb

Newsflash: Bluetooth can help your green thumb. The Parrot Flower Power Wireless Plant Sensor ($59.95) is a smart gardening gadget capable of assessing your plants' needs and sends alerts to your smartphone. Simply insert this doohickey into the soil and let its four sensors do the work.

Then look at the accompanying iOS or Android app for real-time info related to sunlight exposure, soil moisture, temperature, humidity and drainage.

1 Epson Expression ET-2550 EcoTank All-in-One, $399.
2 Isaac Mizrahi Smartwatch, $299.99.
3 Dell Inspiron 11 3000, from $499.99.
4 Nespresso OriginalLine Prodigio, from $269.
5 UA HealthBox, $549.

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metro SPORTS

"I've always wanted to go against Wade in a playoff series": LeBron James eyes a possible Eastern Conference final vs. his former team

Lowry finds humour in his sad shooting stroke

RAPTORS GAME 2 PREVIEW

All-star point guard posting a paltry 30.6 FG%

A mug shot of Kyle Lowry on a milk carton was making the rounds on social media on Wednesday.

Posted by Twitter account Fake SportsCenter, the milk carton had Lowry's smiling face under the headline: "Missing. Have you seen me? Last seen in the regular-season."

Lowry was the first to admit Wednesday that the version of himself that earned NBA all-star honours has gone AWOL. That's why he stayed on the Air Canada Centre court, headphones in, black hoodie pulled up over his head, until 1:15 a.m. after Tuesday night's overtime loss to Miami in Game 1 of their second-round playoff series.

"Just being a kid again, trying to have some fun," Lowry said of his early morning shooting session. "It was being out there and having time to reflect on things and think about the game that I grew up as a kid ... and the game I love. There were countless nights I've done that back in North Philly."

Lowry was in good spirits after Wednesday's practice, open and honest with the couple of dozen reporters in attendance. He half-heartedly joked about an unflattering stat that a Raptors media relations person had shown him: his 30.6 shooting field goal percentage is the worst in a single post-season in 50 years.

"I'll take that award, I mean it's an award ... take some type of good with it," he laughed — but followed up with a heavy sigh. "It's life. It's a basketball game, I know I can shoot better than 31 per cent."

The scrappy, hard-working guard has been instrumental in the Raptors' rise over the last three seasons. His shooting was off during the opening-round series against Indiana, but he made up for it with solid ball movement and defence. Lowry said the fact he's in a slump now, in the biggest stretch of his career, is what's most frustrating.

"It's crazy. It's mind-boggling to me. 'Dude how are you not making these shots?' For me, I go into the games like I'm about to go and we are going to win this game. Then I miss a shot and it's 'OK.' Then I miss another shot and that's when it's like 'Alright, I've got to try and do something different.'"

The Raptors had chances to win Game 1 despite Lowry's poor performance, but Toronto's two-time all-star said they can't win the series if he doesn't turn it around.

He'll get his next shot on Thursday, when the Raptors host the Heat in Game 2. The series then moves to Miami for Game 3 on Saturday and Game 4 on Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kyle Lowry sank just three of his 13 shots from the field in the Raptors' 102-96 overtime loss to the Heat on Tuesday night. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **I got texts from my teammates and I've talked to them. They have my back. I just have to go out and play.**
> Kyle Lowry

IN BRIEF

Coyotes to promote 26-year-old to GM: Source

A person familiar with the situation has told The Associated Press that the Arizona Coyotes will promote 26-year-old John Chayka to general manager, making him the youngest GM in NHL history.

Chayka, a native of Jordan Station, Ont., will replace Don Maloney, who was fired on April 11 after nine seasons as GM.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cubs sweep rival Pirates

Ben Zobrist hit a three-run home run, Anthony Rizzo also connected and Jon Lester worked out of a pair of jams to carry the NL Central-leading Chicago Cubs over the second-place Pittsburgh Pirates 6-2 Wednesday for a three-game sweep.

With its seventh win in eight games, Chicago improved to a major league-best 20-6. The Cubs also won their seventh straight road game.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nats produce royal rout

Daniel Murphy finished a triple shy of the cycle, slumping slugger Bryce Harper also went deep and the Washington Nationals routed the floundering Kansas City Royals 13-2 on Wednesday.

Stephen Strasburg improved to 5-0 allowing two runs on five hits and a walk while striking out seven in six tidy innings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

‘I feel I’m ready’

HOCKEY

Matthews will bring NHL-level skill to world championship

Auston Matthews says he is ready for the NHL.

Matthews is the most likely player the Maple Leafs will choose with the first-overall pick in June, a player with the ability to be a No. 1 centre and the drive that sets him apart from the rest of his draft class.

“It’s a grind, 82 games, but I definitely think I’m ready for it,” Matthews told Torstar News Service in a phone interview. “There will be a learning curve. At the same time, others have gone through it. I feel I’m ready.”

The 18-year-old Matthews, who came to love hockey watching the Coyotes while growing up in Scottsdale, Ariz., will spend May with Team USA at the world hockey championship in Russia. It’s a tournament he believes will only help him as a player.

“There are a lot of experienced players playing in this. A lot of NHLers,” he said.

The tournament will also be the last chance for scouts to have a look at Matthews and Patrik Laine, the likely No. 2 pick who will suit up for Finland.

> **It’s a very historic organization, an Original Six team, and it would be a fun place to play.**
> Auston Matthews on Toronto and the Maple Leafs

Matthews has been used to having the critical eyes of scouts and critics on him this season. But another set of discerning eyes will be on him in Russia — those belonging to Leafs head coach Mike Babcock.

“He’s one of the best coaches in the league,” Matthews said. “Very well-respected. He’s won the Cup. When he was in Detroit, they always made the playoffs, always had good teams. He coaches the Olympic team. He’s a very good coach.”

If Matthews has done some homework on Babcock, then Babcock has done even more on Matthews.

“A real good kid,” Babcock said Tuesday. “Ultra competitive. Elite talent. Unbelievable hands. Wants to be great.

“I got to know him a little bit last year. Tony Granato was one of my assistant coaches, and his brother, Don, coached him (with the U.S. Development Team). So they brought him (Matthews) and (Matthew) Tkachuk into our office the odd time.

“Obviously, I took an interest in watching him. He’s a real good player. I’ll get a chance to watch him at the world championships. Laine, too. Mark Hunter (the Leafs director of player personnel) gets paid the big bucks to make that decision. I’m sure he’ll make a good one.”

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Auston Matthews, right, says playing professionally in Switzerland this past season has improved many areas of his game. MARC SCHUMACHER/EQ IMAGES VIA ZUMA PRESS

Real Madrid’s Gareth Bale nods the ball away from Gael Clichy at the Santiago Bernabeu. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Another all-Madrid final set

Real Madrid ground out a convincing 1-0 victory over Manchester City on Wednesday to line up a Champions League final against city rival Atletico Madrid.

The second leg of the semifinal was decided by a superb shot by Gareth Bale from a tight angle that deflected off defender Fernando in the 20th minute and was marked down as an own goal. Madrid advanced with a 1-0 aggregate win after a scoreless first-leg draw in England last week.

Real Madrid will be trying to win its 11th Champions League title in the all-Spanish showdown in Milan on May 28, a rematch of the 2014 final — when it beat Atletico 4-1 after extra time.

“We will give everything in our souls in another final,” Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos said. “We managed to stay united and soak up the pressure to try and pull it off. We’ve eliminated a huge team in City. It has taken a lot to get to the final, but we deserve it.”

Wednesday ended City’s best ever showing in the Champions League. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Golden Boy calls out Trump for links shenanigans

Of all the things Donald Trump has been called on the campaign trail, this one might sting the most: golf cheat.

Oscar De La Hoya says that’s what he saw on the links when Trump joined up with his group at Trump National Golf Club in Los Angeles two years ago. Trump, he said, cheated not once but twice in the space of two holes.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moose Jaw forward Hunt rakes in top WHL award

Moose Jaw Warriors winger Dryden Hunt was named the Western Hockey League’s player of the year on Wednesday.

Hunt, who led the WHL with 58 goals and 58 assists in 72 regular-season games, accepted the Four Broncos Memorial Trophy at the WHL awards ceremony in front of former NHLers Joe Sakic, Bobby Clarke and Lanny McDonald. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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RECIPE Lemon Thyme Chicken Burger

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Lemon and thyme are such an appealing spring flavour combo that we come back to it over and over. It's an unexpected addition to a burger and don't skip the goat cheese which takes it over the top.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
- 1 lb ground chicken
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 1 egg, whisked
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 onion, finely minced
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp dijon mustard
- salt and pepper
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 wholewheat rolls
- toppings like lettuce, tomatoes, goat cheese

Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together the meat, thyme, zest, juice, egg, breadcrumbs, onions mustard and salt and pepper. Using your hands, form the mixture into 4 x ¾ inch-thick patties.

2. Heat up your pan or barbecue. Add a drop of vegetable oil to the pan if you're cooking them on the stove. Cook the patties over medium/high heat for about 5 minutes on each side. You want the internal temperature to be between 165 and 170.

3. Top your buns with whatever your family likes but we highly recommend goat cheese.

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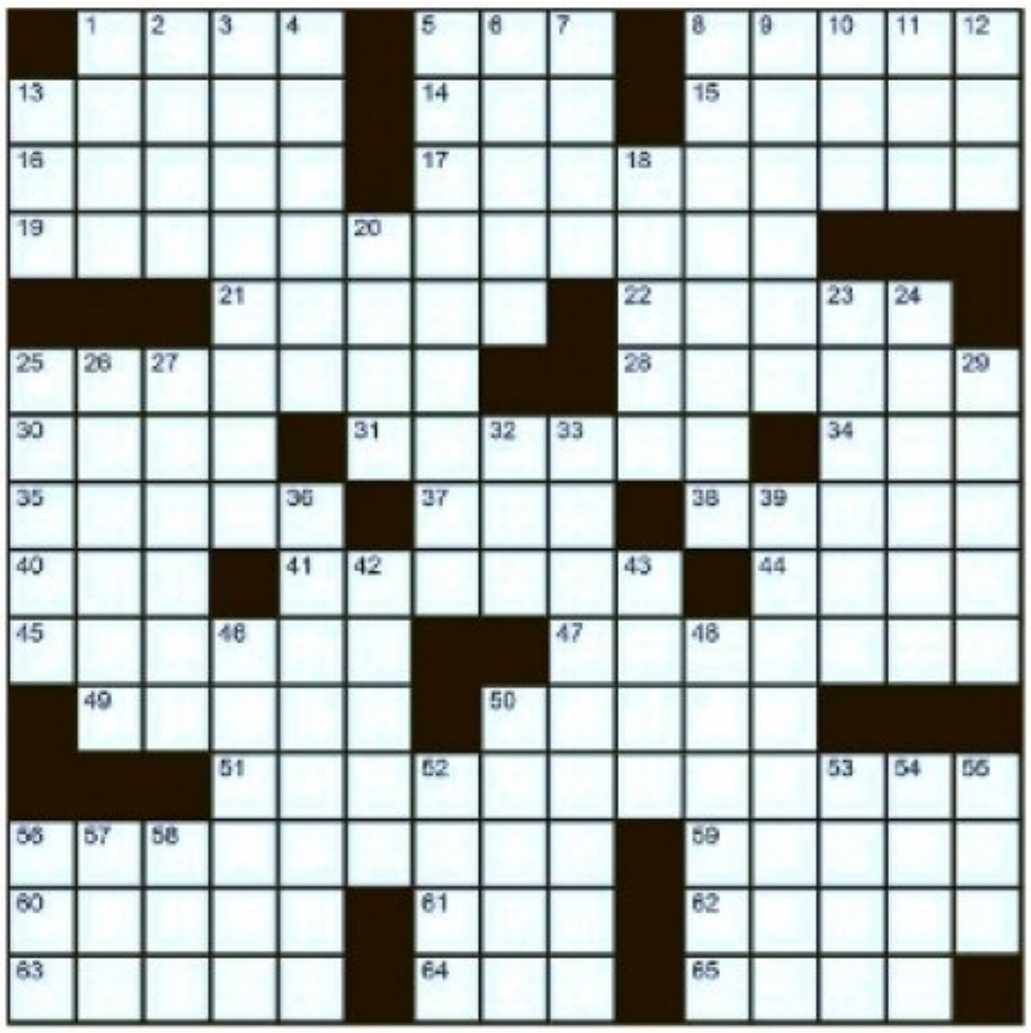
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Cutting comment
5. "Roxanne" (1987) star ...his initials-sharers
8. Relating to Atomic Number 76
13. Jazz/funk saxophonist Mr. Parker
14. Head-to-_
15. "Wheel of Fortune" letters turner
16. Drinking prop
17. Montreal borough
19. Hit movie of 1984 directed by Canadian director Ivan Reitman
21. Prison takeover, for example
22. Sun-dried brick
25. Newfoundland rum
28. Host/comedian Mr. O'Brien's
30. Murmurs
31. Fort _. _ (Northeastern BC city)
34. Dangerous fly, when doubled
35. Put down
37. "Wowy!"
38. Cyber correspondence
40. Broadcaster Mr. King, for short
41. Make a new home, as a bird
44. Gymnast Ms. Korbut
45. Very small antelope which makes a distinct sound when alarmed
47. Cone-shaped Medieval headdresses
49. "_ _ say more?"
50. Prefix to 'comedy' (Comedic drama)
51. Cheater's problem: 2 wds.
56. Oval track vehicle: 2 wds.
59. Sample that sample: 2 wds.
60. Jean _ (Quebec pharmacy chain)
61. _ de coeur (Heartfelt protest)
62. Some seals
63. Short acting performances
64. Suffix with 'Expert'
65. Peter Pan character

DOWN
1. Aptly-named hot springs town in England
2. Prefix to 'bat' (Circus performer)
3. Appraise anew
4. Tuxedo-wearer's accessory
5. 'Crossroads of Friendship' town in southern Saskatchewan
6. Computer's pointer/clicker
7. Cobblestone
8. Cooked too much
9. _ and Delilah
10. Alphabetic trio
11. Lodging for road trippers
12. Feline
13. Food additive, commonly
18. Stretch to grasp
20. Bird 'bills' in Boucherville
23. Celebrity chef Mario of ABC's "The Chew"
24. Navy rank
25. Steamily sting
26. Nirvana rocker Kurt
27. Mr. _ ("Fantasy Island" character)
29. Actress Ms. Ward's
32. Morning beverage, informally
33. 1984 Steve Perry song that goes "You should've been gone / Knowing how I made you feel.": 2 wds.
36. Southern hemisphere constellation
39. Personalized embroidery, as on a bathrobe
42. "Stand By Me" by Ben _. _
43. Ms. Hatcher
46. Joyce of "Three's Company"
48. Last regular play baseball innings
50. Department store chain
52. Nero's 701
53. Literature governess Jane
54. "Egad!"
55. Ands: French
56. Lettered colas
57. Hunky-dory
58. _ bono? = For whose benefit? ...in Latin

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Business, commerce and all financial dealings are blessed today — no question. Do the deal. In addition, purchases of beautiful things for yourself and loved ones will please you. Ka-ching!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You love beautiful things, good food and the outdoors, especially lovely gardens. Today is the perfect day to enjoy these things. It's also a lovely day for romance.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Solitude in beautiful surroundings will delight you today. Pamper yourself in any way that you can.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will enjoy hanging out with creative, charming people today. You feel social and warmhearted toward others.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will make a great impression on bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs today. In fact, a flirtation or romance with your boss or someone in a position of authority might blossom.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Give yourself a chance to see beautiful places today. Travel for pleasure will be a treat, because you will truly appreciate the artistic creations of others.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Because you can benefit from the wealth and resources of others today, this is a good time to ask for a loan or a mortgage. In all your dealings with others, people will be generous to you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Relations with partners and close friends are warm and friendly today. This is a great day for a date or schmoozing with the general public.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Co-workers are supportive today. You might get a raise or praise! You will enjoy making your workplace more attractive in some way. (Let others help you if they offer.)

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Love at first sight is encouraged by the stars today. Whatever you do will be pleasant, fun-loving and enjoyable, because this is a lighthearted, pleasant day.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a good day to check out real estate deals or to buy something beautiful for your home. Invite the gang over for good food and drink, because today also favors family get-togethers.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You can make money with your words today, which is good news for writers, actors, teachers and people in sales.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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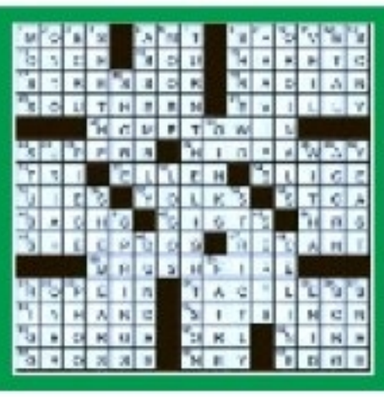

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TAKE ADVANTAGE WITH A **$750** THANK YOU BONUS◊

on select 2016 models

2016 ACCENT 5-DOOR

GLS Auto model shown♦

L MANUAL INCLUDES:

- 4-WHEEL DISC BRAKES
- REAR SPOILER
- 60/40 SPLIT-FOLDING REAR SEATBACK
- 137 HP 1.6L GDI ENGINE
- 5-YEAR WARRANTY

FINANCE FOR ONLY **$32** WEEKLY AT **1.9%** FOR 84 MONTHS WITH $0 DOWN† PLUS **$4,530** IN PRICE ADJUSTMENTS◊

INCLUDES A **$750** BONUSΔ

YOURS FOR $10,995‡

2016 ELANTRA GT

Limited model shown♦

L INCLUDES:

- AIR CONDITIONING
- PROJECTION HEADLIGHTS
- REAR SPOILER
- TRACTION CONTROL SYSTEM
- POWER WINDOWS
- 5-YEAR WARRANTY

LEASE FOR ONLY **$98** BIWEEKLY

THAT'S LIKE PAYING **$49** WEEKLY AT **1.3%** FOR 60 MONTHS◊

PLUS A **$750** BONUSΔ

2016 SONATA

2.0T Sport Ultimate model shown♦

GL AUTO INCLUDES:

- HEATED FRONT SEATS
- BLUETOOTH® HANDS-FREE PHONE SYSTEM
- 5" TOUCH-SCREEN DISPLAY
- REARVIEW CAMERA
- 16" ALLOY WHEELS
- 5-YEAR WARRANTY

LEASE FOR ONLY **$118** BIWEEKLY

THAT'S LIKE PAYING **$59** WEEKLY AT **0%** FOR 60 MONTHS◊

PLUS A **$750** BONUSΔ

THE ALL-NEW 2016 TUCSON

Ultimate model shown♦

2.0L FWD INCLUDES:

- 5" DISPLAY AUDIO
- REARVIEW CAMERA
- PROJECTION HEADLIGHTS WITH LED ACCENTS
- BLUETOOTH® HANDS-FREE PHONE SYSTEM
- FRONT 3-STAGE HEATED SEATS
- 5-YEAR WARRANTY

LEASE FOR ONLY **$130** BIWEEKLY

THAT'S LIKE PAYING **$65** WEEKLY AT **1.8%** FOR 60 MONTHS◊

PLUS A **$750** BONUSΔ

H-Factor

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT.

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5-year/100,000 km Comprehensive Limited Warranty††

5-year/100,000 km Powertrain Warranty

5 YEAR WARRANTY

5-year/100,000 km Emission Warranty

5-year/Unlimited km 24 Hour Roadside Assistance

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